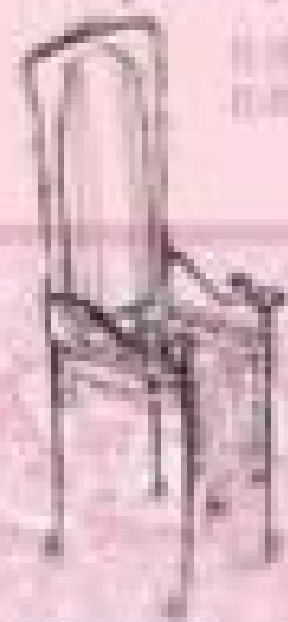


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THE DESTINY OF LOVE

王若瑟著



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你爱我，这是天注定的缘分！



Fated Marriage

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part 1

Fated Marriage by Big Grey Wolf With Wings

Synopsis: <http://www.books.shushengbar.com/?p=5473>

Review:

[http://seoulinlovenow.blogspot.com.au/search/label/Chinese%20~%20Novelist%](http://seoulinlovenow.blogspot.com.au/search/label/Chinese%20~%20Novelist%20)

Female Lead: Han Ting Ting

Male Lead: Qin Song

Chapter One (Part 1)

Han Ting Ting helped pick up the boxes her future mother-in-law knocked over. She scanned the shop's surroundings, and saw through a window Qin Song sitting with a hot woman in a café. The passers-by looked enviously at the beautiful pair.

Han Ting Ting panicked. She grabbed her mother-in-law, and bolted to a nearby ice-cream shop.

Relieved her mother-in-law didn't spot Qin Song and his lady friend, she called his phone while queuing to order ice-cream.

'Your mother and I were outside a café,' she said. 'I saw... you and your lady friend.'

Qin Song answered her with a grunt. The café background music heard from his end was more responsive than him, it was apparent they couldn't have been more distant. Her sweaty palms almost made her phone slip.

'You... hurry up and take off with your lady friend,' she said.

He pondered her request before replying. 'Why?'

She lost it after she heard him asked why. He was the one having a rendezvous with his lover out in public, she was being courteous by letting him know he was easily spotted yet he had the nerve to ask her why.

From his end she heard a lady's velvety voice said something to him then he lost his patience too.

'Whatever you want,' he said. 'I'm hanging up.'

She didn't get to tell him to not hang up before she heard the signal of a dead phone connection.

Unlike her unreasonable fiancé, the shop server patiently waited for her to end the phone conversation.

‘Ma’am, what ice-cream flavors have you decided on?’ the shop server asked.

‘What ice-cream flavors are available in the biggest size that you have?’ she asked.

The consequence of ordering the biggest serving of their available ice-cream flavors was her future mother-in-law vomiting and enduring diarrhea. Her future mother-in-law had to be driven home.

Qin Song received the bad news, and rushed over the ice-cream shop. She spent a lot of energy calming down the people involved in the unwanted incident so she didn’t appreciate being dragged by her fiancé outside the shop. His scowl was unappealing as the base of a dirty pot.

‘Do you think your actions matches up to the standard of an educated and ethical citizen?’ he asked.

Her head was lowered enough to be face to face with the ground that her voice came out no louder than a mosquito. ‘I’m a pre-school teach-’

‘Do you often serve each kid in your class an ice-cream serving meant for two people?’ he asked.

‘I... I didn’t know today the ice-cream shop was having a special promotion, buy one get one free...’ she said, feeling tears of shame swim in her eyes. But she wasn’t the only one at fault so she pushed aside her shame. ‘Why didn’t you leave the café sooner? You didn’t listen... what happened is your fault too.’

Her accusation made him angry enough to smile sarcastically. ‘How is it my fault?’

His deceptive alluring smile caused a ‘little country bun’ like her to feel intimidated.

It was rumoured that out of the Liang’s famous six sworn brothers, he was the most handsome.

In the beginning the reason she agreed to marry him because he was eye candy. If she had to find someone to marry, it was better to marry a handsome man to perve on.

He noticed she stopped nagging and staring at him. Her stare made the hair on his skin rose. He took it as a symptom of regret. He chose to propose to her because she looked like low maintenance woman, but he found out looks were deceiving.

‘Let’s go,’ he said, sighing her blank state. ‘I’ll take you home.’

She was still dazed when he yanked her arm, causing her left leg tangle

with her right leg. Her quick thinking to grab hold of the nearest person to her saved her a painful fall.

He wasn't impressed with her strong grip on his waist. Her nails dug through his thin shirt and the pain made it hard to breathe. He could only give her a cold glare.

She got a feeling she looked like a fool holding onto him. She struggled to stand. After regaining her balance, she released her hands from his waist.

'I'm... I'm sorry,' she said.

He clamped his teeth all the way to the car. 'Get in.'

At home Han Ting Ting's mum asked her about the shopping outing. She left out the part about nearly killing her future mother-in-law with ice-cream. She showed her mum the items her future mother-in-law bought.

'Why are the shopping bags light today?' mum asked.

The bags were light by standards of shopaholics like her future mother-in-law. She muttered incoherent sounds to buy time to strum up an excuse. 'After the wedding dress and shoes were ordered there wasn't much left to buy.'

'Was the wedding money I gave you enough?' mum asked. 'If it isn't, I'll give you more. You only get to marry once in your life, don't be a scrooge about how much you spend on your wedding. Make sure you go to all the stores you want and buy without a care.'

She returned her mum's wedding money and credit card. 'Mum... aunty said that Qin Song and I are both the only child in our families. After marriage anything that belongs to Qin Song will belong to me too so aunty asked me to give back your money and consider it as a wedding dowry.'

'You keep it,' mum said. 'It was the money I saved for your wedding day. It's not right that aunty got to buy your wedding dress and everything else for you. I feel guilty I don't know what to get you. Last week the Qin family delivered your new clothes they bought you. I turned over the price tags and each outfit was five times your father's salary. Our family aren't in their league.'

'Mum, don't say that,' she said. 'Dad and you worked hard to raise me, it should be me who's buying things for dad and you.'

'Your dad and I don't need expensive things,' mum said. 'Ting Ting, after you enter the Qin family household remember not to use their

money to buy anything for dad and me.'

'I get it mum,' she said, lowering her head to hide her expression behind the curtain of her hair. 'Dad and you don't need to worry, I'll get along well with the Qin family.'

At night the wind made it less humid than it was during the day. Han Ting Ting showered and her hair was still damp when she sat on her bed to call her best friend, Tu Tu.

Tu Tu listened to her recount of the disastrous shopping day.

Tu Tu burst out laughing. 'Confess, you faked falling to cop a feel of Qin Song's body.'

She wished she owned the superpower of phasing to reach through the phone and pinch Tu Tu's cheeks that were most likely sore from a laughing fit.

'Your bridesmaid dress is bought,' she said. 'You can borrow my shoes, no need to over pack your luggage.'

She and Tu Tu had similar body builds and often swapped outfits since they were little girls. 'When can you take leave?' she asked. 'I'll book your flight ticket.'

She reasoned since Qin Song's secretary was always shadowing her and asking if she needed help with anything, asking his secretary to book a flight for the bridesmaid wouldn't be an overbearing request. But she was adamant to be the one paying for the flight ticket.

'Wow,' Tu Tu said. 'You've hit the jackpot. You're already acting like a rich family's daughter-in-law with your new found generosity.'

'Tu Tu, if you keep making fun of me, I'll expose your weakness,' she said.

After her threat Tu Tu eased up on the teasing and they chatted about other wedding details before saying goodnight to one another.

She hung up the phone and received an incoming call from Qin Song.

'Your phone was busy for a long time,' he said. 'Who were you talking to?'

In the short period they've known each other, he was always snappy with her. There was no point dwelling on his treatment of her, they were from two different worlds and the way they communicated was as if they spoke in foreign languages with one another.

'What do you want?' she asked.

'Tomorrow dad's being released from the hospital,' he said. 'Come with

me to have dinner with my parents.'

She gasped, her future father-in-law's love for his wife was infamous. She'd get an earful from her future father-in-law at dinner.

'Miss Han Ting Ting, keep in mind I don't want what happened today to occur again in the future,' he said. 'I've kept my end of the bargain and haven't given you any grief.'

Her palms were sweaty. She felt a familiar sense of guilt like she felt back in her school days. Whenever she was rostered to clean her classroom instead of tidying it up the class ended up cluttered.

'If I didn't catch you and your girlfriend on a date then I wouldn't have chosen the biggest ice-cream serving,' she said. 'You need to take half the blame too.'

'You're an early education teacher,' he said. 'Shouldn't you set a better example by being honest? You caused the mess so don't shift the responsibility to someone else. You must be teaching the country's next generation bad habits.'

'Why must you continuously use my job as a benchmark to pick on my traits?' she asked.

'If you don't behave the way you do then I won't need to criticise you,' he said.

'You...' she said in exasperation.

She was only used to dealing with sweet natured kids and felt hopeless against an unreasonably stubborn person.

He noticed she had no combat and changed to smug mode. 'What about me? Go ahead and say what you want.'

'You...' she said. 'What time will you pick me up for tomorrow's dinner?'

He coughed up the glass of water he was drinking while waiting to hear her weak excuses. But she unexpectedly backed down, causing him to choke on water.

'Forget it, I'll take a taxi over,' she said and hung up on him.

It was his turn to hear the signal of a dead phone connection. Except his end was still lively with the sounds of a coughing fit after she disconnected.

End of Chapter One (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter One (Part 2)

Han Ting Ting's future father-in-law Qin Yun and mother-in-law Zhang Yu were both from prominent families with successful companies and Qin Song was their only heir.

Not long after graduation, Zhang Yu married Qin Yun. Zhang Yu's married life was smooth. Though Zhang Yu was about to have a daughter-in-law, Zhang Yu still looked like a young beauty and occasionally Zhang Yu caused minor incidents like falling sick from overdosing on ice-cream.

Han Ting Ting was grateful toward Zhang Yu for not snitching on her to Qin Yun. Otherwise Qin Yun wouldn't have greeted her with a rare smile when she walked holding hands with Qin Song into the Qin's family home.

Inside the Qin's family home, Qin Song wrapped an arm around her shoulder and pulled her close to his chest. He had an alluring masculine scent. Being in close proximity to him flustered her.

'You're spacing out again,' Qin Song said sweetly. 'Greet my parents.'

She calmly smiled and greeted his parents. 'Hello uncle, hello aunty.'

She was happy to see Zhang Yu's less sickly complexion.

'Ting Ting, you're finally here,' Zhang Yu said, gesturing to the dining room. 'Come and eat dinner.'

Qin Song followed her to the dining room and sat next to her at the dining table.

Unexpectedly, Qin Song snatched her bowl and glared at her. She diplomatically picked up another bowl.

Qin Yun coughed. 'How's the wedding planning?'

Qin Song pretended to be too busy eating to hear Qin Yun.

She put her bowl down and summoned a polite tone. 'The wedding planning is on schedule and there hasn't been a problem.'

Speaking to Qin Yun was like reporting to her boss, it was hard for her not to be nervous.

'We're all family here,' Qin Yun said. 'You don't need to be polite around me.'

Qin Yun was happy with his future daughter-in-law. He thought her

gentle temperament was necessary to handle his son's childish antics.

Zhang Yu was fond of their future daughter-in-law too. 'Ting Ting, when your parents are free invite them over for dinner.'

'That's right,' Qin Yun said. 'After you marry into our family, your parents will feel your void. Make sure you invite them over often.'

'Your mum's spicy dishes were delicious,' Zhang Yu said.

Qin Yun coughed profusely, and his complexion turned pale.

Qin Song was silent during dinner. But hearing Qin Yun's coughing, he signalled for her to bid his parents good night.

She wanted to leave early too to let Qin Yun rest. But Zhang Yu kept recounting embarrassing stories about Qin Song that it was hard for her to leave without appearing rude.

After dinner, she and Qin Song were cajoled to chat in the living room. They sat next to each other on the sofa and Zhang Yu continued the one way conversation.

Qin Song draped his arm around her shoulder. He endured Zhang Yu's stories at his expense while she endured him stroking her hair like they were real lovers.

She wore a strapless dress. Sometimes Qin Song's hand wandered down onto her shoulder and she'd lower her head to hide her blush.

Zhang Yu stopped talking after noticing Qin Song was more attentive caressing his fiancée than he was listening to Zhang Yu. Zhang Yu knew gaining the attention of young lovers was futile and signalled for Qin Yun to retire upstairs with Zhang Yu.

After Qin Song's parents retired, he withdrew his hand from her hair.

'Let's leave,' Qin Song said.

She was focused on his hand movements that she didn't realize his parents left the living room.

Qin Song stood, and looked confusedly at his blushing 'little country bun' still sitting on the sofa.

'Han Ting Ting, what perverted thoughts are running through your head?' he asked.

Qin Song drove Han Ting Ting home, but he didn't leave immediately like usual. He wanted to take out his frustrations on her.

'Do you remember about our agreement?' he asked.

She nodded. 'We can't fall in love with each other.'

He heard the determination in her voice and was relieved.

‘You’re a good person,’ he said. ‘A good person like you shouldn’t fall for someone like me.’

It was the first time she heard him pointing out that they were two different kinds of people. Her body tensed, and she listened to him vent.

Why was it that his intention to vent on her, turned out to be her making him more frustrated? There was an ache in his chest. He wanted to push her out of the car and speed off.

But then he recalled how their closeness tonight had affected her. He wanted to get rid of any of her unrealistic expectations so he gritted his teeth and wanted to make it clear to her not to put any false hopes on him.

‘Tonight you won’t focus on playing your role as my fake partner,’ he said. ‘Right now you may not realize what’s going on in your heart. Sometimes, it’s hard to control our own feelings.’

‘What do you mean, I don’t know what’s going on inside my heart?’ she asked. ‘Are you saying that you know more about my feelings than I do?’

Her questions knocked out his thought process and made him speechless.

‘Qin Song, what makes you think I’m falling in love with you?’ she asked softly like how she would talk to a kid who felt insecure.

He thought carefully and decided not to go around in circles. ‘Then why are you always staring at me and blushing?’

‘When?’ she asked.

‘Yesterday at the parking lot you were staring at me in a daze,’ he said. ‘Tonight because I wanted my parents to retire in their room, I touched you a couple of times and you blushed like a red melon.’

‘If a girl who was a stranger to you was touching you all over your body, wouldn’t you blush too?’ she asked.

If a woman touched him seductively, he wouldn’t blush, but his body would react in a different way. He couldn’t refute her logic.

‘Forget it,’ he said. ‘Just remember our agreement and don’t fall in love with me. Get out of the car.’

She wasn’t a confrontational person so she unbuckled her seat belt and opened the car door. ‘I like a man who’s mature and has a calm temperament. I’m not attracted to men like you. Don’t worry, I won’t break our agreement. Good night and sweet dreams.’

Sweet dreams? He sat shocked in his car. He couldn’t believe that he

was rejected by a ‘little country bun.’ How dare she accuse him of not being mature and calm? What about him that wasn’t mature or calm?

End of Chapter One (Part 2)

Related

part 3

Chapter One (Part 3 of 3)

Han Ting Ting walked carefully up the dark stairs that led to her home and she counted each step. She didn't like Qing Song, like him, all she needed was someone decent to marry to ease their families' worries.

Her grandpa was a soldier and for a period of ten years he was also a guard for Qin Song's grandfather, Commander Zhang. When her family moved from the country to their new home, her grandpa hid from her dad that he called Commander Zhang for a favour.

Commander Zhang's whole family were good and compassionate people. After her father settled into his new job through Commander Zhang's connection, both families met up often like close friends that haven't seen each other for a long time. At that time Qin Yun's health was poor. The Qin and Zhang households prioritised Qin Song's arranged marriage. Han Ting Ting was considered the best wife candidate for Qin Song.

Qin Song during that time was on the verge of losing his patience. During their first meeting they found out they were motivated to get married for the same reason and he decided that she was the one.

She and Qin Song agreed to be married for one year. After one year they were both free from the marriage to go their separate ways.

Qin Song added a special condition to their agreement that during their one year of marriage, she was not allowed to love him.

'I think changing that condition to both sides can't harbour any feelings for each other make more sense,' she said.

Back then she wasn't accustomed to Qin Song's sharp way of speaking and made the suggestion purely out of fairness for both parties instead of to spite him.

Qin Song at that time he looked at her with distrust in his eyes, and was also the first time he looked at her carefully under a hostile atmosphere.

‘Don’t worry, you’re not my type!’ he said coldly.

She secretly cursed him. What a stinky brat! He didn’t having any manners at all!

After getting to know Qin Song better, the distance between them gradually lessen, she even felt that there was a part of him that was a little... naive like a child. It was plausible because inside each man was an inner child.

Kept in the dark shadow of her heart there was no sunlight, where no one could see, she carefully hid all her sorrows and didn’t allow herself to show her vulnerable side.

Close to the wedding day, what made Han Ting Ting happiest was her best friend Tu Tu’s visit. From trying out wedding contraptions, ordering clothes, going for bridal spa treatments... Tu Tu always went with her. It was like how it used to be back during their school days, they worked part time jobs together and did everything else as a pair and were joined at the hip.

Qin Song wasn’t pleased with their closeness, one of Han Ting Ting’s kind was enough, a clone of her was too much to bear.

The distinction between the two was that Tu Tu had a sharper wit and spoke more sarcastically than Han Ting Ting.

Qin Song and Tu Tu’s personalities clashed for that reason, fortunately Han Ting Ting was there to mediate their quarrels. Qin Song was also preoccupied with a mountain workload that needed to be done and that helped to lessen the spare time to exchange verbal blows with Tu Tu. Time flew by fast and in a blink of an eye Qin Song and Han Ting Ting’s wedding day arrived.

Qin Yun’s poor health meant he didn’t have spare energy to waste, instead of a grand wedding the wedding was simple. When picking up the bride, roads were closed for the wedding convoy of cars that drove bumper to bumper like a dragon moving through the curves of the roads.

Behind the groom were the other five famous Liang’s sworn brothers. Out of them Han Ting Ting had met Li Wei Ran the most times, because he was Zhang Yu’s nephew and Qin Song’s older cousin.

The Han's family home was located in a non-flashy area assigned by the employer of Han Ting Ting's dad. The house was built years ago, her mum had cleaned it well but the house was still shabby in contrast to the six attractive sworn brothers.

Her dad was more of a practical than a sentimental person. When he saw it was time for the bride to leave he hurried his wife and daughter along who were clinging to each other delaying the inevitable.

'Enough, let our daughter go!' dad said.

Her dad's words caused her mum let out a dam of tears.

She was reluctant to let her mum go and wiped her mum's tears. 'Mum, it's time for me to go.'

'Ting Bao, be good...' mum said. 'Be good!'

Her mum didn't know what else to say and kept mumbling the same things.

She nodded and cried at the same time.

She turned in her dad's direction. 'Dad, give yourself plenty of rest too, you don't need to take on investigations that put your life under threat!'

'Kiddo! What are saying?' dad said.

Her dad's passion for his line of work has not diminished over the decades. But in consideration for his daughter's wedding day, he let go of her bagging his work ethics. 'Ok, I'll be more careful! Ting Ting, after you're married to Qin Song, be a filial daughter-in-law for the Qin household.'

She listened to her dad's advice and nodded.

Qin Song was suppressing his impatience whilst watching the separation scene of the Han household. It was his sworn brothers' threatening looks aimed at him to break up the bride's family that forced him to intervene.

'Dad, mum, I'll look after... Ting Ting. Dad, mum, rest assured that you can hand her over to me!' Qin Song said and felt like there was a heavy cold sensation on his back.

Ting's dad clutched his hand like a soldier. Qin Song thought Ting's dad was

going to threaten him if he bully the Han family's little darling daughter then he'd have to answer to Ting's dad. Unexpectedly Qin Song's train of thought was off base.

'Qin Song, in the future if Ting Ting does something wrong, go ahead and discipline her!' Ting's dad said.

Qin Song was overjoyed to hear Ting's dad's permission to discipline Ting, grinned widely and nodded in full agreement. 'Yes, dad!'

Everyone in the room apart from Ting's parents that saw Qin Song's mood lifted from his exchange with his father-in-law, all turned their heads around and sighed.

Han Ting Ting knew that her wedding day was a pretense and only felt burdened, there was no sense of anticipation and nervousness that a bride should have. When she was saying goodbye to her parents, her mum cried until her mum's eyes were swollen and her dad who was usually hot blooded gave off a vibe that he was a little choked up.

Then she entered the wedding car and when the wheels spun to depart, from the rear window she saw her dad supporting her mum upright, she felt a sting in her nose and felt oppressed by an ache on her chest.

Her parents forced her arranged marriage but she still loved her parents. In the world, only her parents loved her unconditionally more than anyone else.

Dad, Mum, I'm sorry!

Qin Song exhaled and leaned into his seat in a more comfortable position then he noticed the 'little country bun' beside him was silently crying, tears rolled onto her lace gloves and wedding dress. Her vulnerable side startled him.

'Ahem...' Qin Song coughed.

Tu Tu who sat at the front passenger seat glared at him through the front mirror. He took out his handkerchief tucked in his vest and passed it to Han Ting Ting.

The more Han Ting Ting thought about the past the more she was heartbroken, all the bottled injustices starting from a year ago were overflowing

inside her heart. The sight of her parents leaning on each other made her regret her foolish desires in the past and felt her heart was cut apart by a knife.

Han Ting Ting's tears wouldn't stop flowing down, her layer of fake eyelashes was coming off and it made Qin Song panic.

'Hey!' Qin Song said. 'Stop crying!'

'Don't cry anymore...' he said.

'Can you stop crying?' he asked.

'Enough...' he said and bent his head down to wipe her tears with his handkerchief. 'Don't cry anymore...'

He patted her back and her tears fell slower so he pulled her close to him for her head to rest on his chest.

If they were younger and crying nonstop, their parents would hug them and pat them. After they grew up, they didn't need that kind of comfort often but when they were suffering heartbreak, depressed or feeling useless... if there was someone to hug them and tell them that everything was going to work out like comforting a child... it took away some of that bleakness and shed some comforting warm light into their injured heart.

Tu Tu through the front mirror could see the scene in the back seat. Qin Song that bad, nagging and tactless guy... was comforting his crying bride. Despite his naivety, his efforts to comfort Tu Tu's best friend was a lovable trait.

Didn't Qin Song went through with the arranged marriage to improve his father's declining health? He even said after a year he wanted a divorce... Tu Tu turned to look at the scenery outside the window. Divorce? Tu Tu was doubtful he could ever let go of Tu Tu's lovable best friend. A lot of events could fill one year and Tu Tu could wait a year to prove Qin Song wasn't fooling anyone but himself.

The wedding ceremony was the main event. Before the wedding banquet the groom and bride's families exchanged gifts, gave blessings and formally introduced each Qin extended family member's title to Han Ting Ting for her to greet them. After the wedding ceremony, Qin Yun took a rest and Qin Song had to stand in as the head of the Qin household on behalf of Qin Yun.

Zhang Yu gave Han Ting Ting a rare vintage clear green jade bracelet.

‘This bracelet was passed down to me by my mother-in-law on my wedding day and now I’m passing it on to you,’ Zhang Yu said and put the bracelet on Han Ting Ting’s wrist. ‘Mmm, the bracelet looks old fashion if you don’t like it, give it to your daughter-in-law in the future.’

Qin Yun’s coughing could be heard in the background.

‘Song Song, why is your wedding attire messed up?’ Zhang Yu asked.

The dark stains on the shoulder of Qin Song’s white suit was an eye sore.

‘What did you do to dirty it to this extent?’ Zhang Yu asked and Qin Yun also inspected Qin Song’s suit.

Qin Song turned to look at his wife beside him up and down. Han Ting Ting’s make up was redone, her wedding dress was immaculate, veil spotless and there wasn’t a speck of dust on her wedding attire at all. She had the gull to mock him with a smile! He inhaled deeply, glared at her and cursed her in his heart, ‘little country bun’ you have no conscience!

Han Ting Ting was compensating Qin Song’s predicament with a smile, but his unexpected glare disappointed her and she lowered her head too scared to look at him.

Han Ting Ting ignoring his plight made Qin Song lose his cool, he vowed in his heart that after their wedding day he wasn’t going to let her have a moment of peace. He was going to disrupt her daily life!

Han Ting Ting maintained an apologetic attitude toward Qin Song on their wedding night.

On Han Ting Ting’s wedding day she had to change into eight wedding dresses, her hair was changed to eight different styles and she wore eight different pair of high heels on average were ten centimetres. At the end of her wedding day, Tu Tu and Ji Nan helped her walk into the exclusive wedding suite prepared by the hotel.

Han Ting Ting was trapped in the bathroom that was bigger than her family

home for an hour. She spent it soaking and scrubbing her hair to get rid of all the hair spray. Then she cleansed her body of residues from different body tapes used to keep her wedding dresses from falling off. After her skin was bathed in steam long enough for her face to flush red she put on the white bathroom robe provided by the hotel and stepped outside the bathroom.

The bathroom door was connected to the bedroom. As Han Ting Ting opened the bathroom door and looked up she saw Qin Song standing rigidly in front of her.

Late at night, most wedding guests have left the hotel reception area and only relatives were left but they stayed in booked rooms assigned to them. It was eerily quiet in their wedding suite. The dim chandelier lights on the ceiling shimmered on Qin Song's body. His handsome face didn't give away any of his inner thoughts.

He was staring at her for a long time. It made her subconscious about her state of dress and pulled the collar of the robe closer together to cover her chest and stared back at him.

He shut the bathroom door. Her heart jumped out of her chest. The alcohol stench coming off him drifted up her nose. He didn't say a word, crept to her and pressed her body to his body.

'You!' he said. 'Looking at you now... you look beautiful!'

She lost control of her senses and stood still like a mannequin.

He smiled and his hands stroked her cheeks. 'Your skin is smooth and soft... you're definitely a little country bun!'

His stupor manner woke her up. He was drunk!

He didn't stop stroking her cheeks until he was satisfied they were bright red. Then he gently petted her chest and both of them staggered to the bed. They collapsed onto their wedding bed of petals.

'Pop! Pop! Pop!'

The sudden popping sounds scared him and he rolled off the bed onto the carpet floor.

‘The petal covered balloons on the bed... I forgot to remove them...’

He was too lethargic to move and fell asleep on the carpet.

She pulled up the sleeves of her robes and intended to lift his body onto the bed. But looking carefully at the muscles on his body it was going to be an impossible feat to lift him. Instead she flipped his body over onto his back, propped a pillow behind his head and covered his body with a blanket.

‘Qin Song!’ she said. ‘Do you want to drink water?’

His eyes were shut tight, his right arm shot up in the air and shook his index finger as if to say he didn’t want to drink water. His arm slumped down, his head drooped to the side. Afterward, no matter what she said to him there was no reaction from him.

The night was tranquil.

She collected all the rose petals on the bed and searched around the wedding suite for a bin. The suite was too luxurious and the lighting effect was dreamy. There wasn’t a bin anywhere and she decided to flush the petals down the toilet. She emptied half of the petals into the toilet... then she remembered she didn’t know how to operate the fancy toilet. Then she thought about transferring water from the bathroom sink into the toilet... but the force from a bowl of water wasn’t enough to flush the petals down the toilet. Too much water would flood the toilet... she had no choice except to scoop out the petals in the toilet and hide it otherwise in the morning he’d see a toilet full of petals and she’d be disgraced and embarrassed.

It was the first time she ever stayed in a high class place and she didn’t know how to use any of the lavish fittings and devices.

After the commotion she walked to the bed and it was passed two in the morning. He was sleeping soundly on the floor next to the bed and his body curled up like a prawn. Putt Putt was quietly waiting beside the pillow and Putt Putt’s black eyes were wide opened like grapes.

Putt Putt was an old teddy bear and knew all of Han Ting Ting’s secrets. Tu Tu was jealous of Putt Putt, because he knew many secrets about Han Ting Ting that she never confided in Tu Tu.

In the stillness of the night, her thoughts about Tu Tu seriously jealous of Putt Putt made her smile.

At the start Tu Tu was against Ting Ting's arranged marriage and threatened to cut Ting Ting out of Tu Tu's life. Ting Ting was resolute about going through with the arranged marriage, Tu Tu could only support Ting Ting and flew from miles away to be Ting Ting's bridesmaid.

Tu Tu was indeed Ting Ting's best friend. Ting Ting thought about the times Ting Ting neglected Tu Tu. But Tu Tu stood by Ting Ting and cared about Ting Ting's happiness and well-being.

The morning sunlight was too bright. She kept her tired eyes closed. She was married. Buried in a marriage tomb was better than left exposed on the streets. She held Putt Putt tight in her arms. She reminded herself, after one year the marriage would be over and she could step closer to that person.

Under the morning sunlight, someone immersed themselves with past memories in their sleep.

End of Chapter One (Part 3 of 3)

Related

part 1

Chapter Two (Part 1)

Early morning, Qin Song woke up and groaned. He felt sore all over his body. He tilted his head side to side to stretch his neck muscles. Then he looked up at the bed and saw Han Ting Ting in deep sleep on the bed. Summer sunlight fluttered through the curtains and outlined her body. It was a picturesque morning view.

Blurred memories from last night passed through his head... 'You!' he said. 'Looking at you now... you look beautiful!'

What? When would he learn? He needed to get rid of his bad habit over drinking and spitting out anything that he was thinking. Beautiful... how could he say that Han Ting Ting was beautiful? He rubbed his head and stared at her sleeping form. There was nothing beautiful about her! Yes, she had clear smooth skin, looked a little lovable... No, his standard of beauty had always been high. It wasn't true... how could he be tempted at the sight of someone like her?

Pft! As if he was indecisive over whether he found her attractive or not. What was he doing thinking about rotten thoughts to spoil the beginning of a new day?

He glared at 'little country bun' who was sleeping unaware then he got up from the floor and headed to the bathroom.

Sounds of running water from the bathroom woke Han Ting Ting up. She was busting to go to the toilet, rubbed her sleepy eyes, got off the bed and staggered to the bathroom. The bathroom door was locked.

'Dad, hurry up! I want to use the toilet,' she said in her morning dazed state.

The sounds of running water stopped.

Suddenly the bathroom door opened, 'her dad' had a white towel draped around his waist and he gave her a dirty look.

She bumped into a hard chest that was still damp. Her eyes widened, sleepiness was forgotten and she was awake and alert.

‘Do I look I’m like your dad?’ he asked. ‘You’re only five years younger than me!’

He was approaching thirty, not in his thirties yet! Being mistaken for an old man was an insult to his young self who didn’t hit thirty yet.

‘I’m... I’m... I’m sorry!’ she stuttered.

Stuttering whenever she was nervous or embarrassed was a bad habit she had since she was a kid. She didn’t know where to look to avoid the chiselled body in front of her.

She looked behind him and saw a mist of hot steam... petals was floating on the surface of the bathroom tub filled with water.

Her tongue was more knotty. ‘Those... those... rose petals!’

He gave her a condescending look. ‘What? You’ve never bathed in water with rose petals before?’

The ‘little country bun’ did look like it was the first time she’d seen a tub filled with rose petals. He strutted to the tub and soaked his body from the chin down. He scrubbed his face with the soft rose petals.

He rolled his eyes at her. ‘How long are you planning to stand by the door watching me take a bath?’

‘Qin Song...’ she said hesitantly. ‘Those rose petals... aren’t clean... come out of the tub, stop soaking your body in it!’

He dismissed her concern and reached over to the bench beside the tub and grabbed more rose petals from the bamboo basket.

‘Rose petals are used as a beauty treatment. They’ve been plucked, washed and pressed. How can they not be clean?’ he said.

To prove his point the rose petals held in his hands were pressed directly onto his face and he enjoyed the sensation.

‘Leave the bathroom! Don’t bother me while I’m relaxing!’ he said.

He bluffed removing the towel from his waist, she fell for it, dashed out of the bathroom and closed the door.

What should she do to rectify the situation? Han Ting Ting mumbled to herself.

Her heart telepathically sent a sincere apology to the man who was washing himself happily in the bathroom.

‘I’m sorry! I shouldn’t have been lazy last night! I should have gotten rid of the rose petals after scooping them out of the toilet properly... I should have gone outside the suite to look for a bin! Qin Song, I’m sorry!’ her heart said.

According to their plan, they were meant to rest during the day at the hotel then fly out to Europe for their honeymoon that night at nine.

After lunch Han Ting Ting packed her luggage. Qin Song roamed around the suite idly looking for signs of dust and residues. She wasn’t worried, because she had tidied the suite thoroughly like a professional.

‘What’s this?’ he asked and waved a teddy bear in the air. ‘Why are you bringing this with you on our honeymoon trip?’

She turned away from her luggage and faced Qin Song with a smile. ‘He’s Putt Putt.’

He tossed the raggy teddy bear far away.

She quickly went to pick up Putt Putt and carefully wiped dust off Putt Putt.

‘I’m allergic to dust. Get rid of that filthy thing!’

‘Putt Putt doesn’t molt...’ she said and cradled Putt Putt to her chest. ‘I’ll keep Putt Putt out of sight where you won’t see him.’

‘No way!’ he said.

He finally found something to do to upset ‘little country bun.’ On the outside he looked cold hearted, but on the inside of his heart he felt triumphant and amused.

He snatched the teddy bear from her and was about to toss it further away when he received a frantic phone call from Zhang Yu.

‘Song Song! Ting Ting’s dad had an accident... everyone’s here at the hospital! Ting Ting’s mum wouldn’t let me tell you and Ting Ting about it! I had to sneak

away to tell you, but don't tell Ting Ting! Let her have a memorable and happy honeymoon!' Zhang Yu said.

He silently released Putt Putt and hung up the phone.

'What's wrong with you?' she asked and quickly went to hide Putt Putt.

When she returned his complexion wasn't normal.

'What happened?' she asked.

'Your dad was knocked over while catching a thief. He's in the hospital...' he said but was too scared to reveal that her dad was in the emergency room.

Her legs became mushy and she slumped down on the bed.

'Hey!' he said and sat down next to her. 'My parents are at the hospital with your parents. Don't be alarmed, things aren't critical!'

Her face became bleach white. If his parents were at the hospital then her dad was in a critical condition!

He couldn't bear her lifeless state and called his chauffeur to wait for them outside the hotel.

He pulled her up. 'Let's go, I'll take you to the hospital.'

She was holding the flight ticket tightly in her hands and her voice trembled. 'What about our honeymoon?'

'We'll go on a honeymoon later!' he said and took them briskly outside the suite.

Qin Song tucked Han Ting Ting in the passenger seat, dismissed the chauffeur and drove them to the hospital himself. On the way, he called Liang's private hospital through the hands-free phone system in the car. He asked for the best neurologists to examine her dad's condition. The thought of neurologists made her heart more chaotic.

The moment the car parked at the hospital, she jumped out of the car and went into the hospital and he rushed to follow her.

The hospital was too spacious and she didn't know what route to take. He

caught up to her and clasped her hand.

‘Why are you running aimlessly for?’ he asked.

Sweat beads formed on her skin from running around. ‘Qin Song, where’s my dad?’

He shook his phone and exhaled. ‘I received a call, your dad’s out of the emergency room. He has a minor concussion, nothing too serious.’

A burden fell off her chest and she felt lighter.

He cleared his throat and swiftly took her to find her dad’s hospital room.

Zhang Yu had explained earlier to him that Ting’s dad had jumped off a balcony to catch a thief. Her dad’s head bled, fell unconscious and was brought to the hospital emergency room.

In his head when he first received the news at the hotel the worst case scenario ran through his head and he imagined her dad had fell from the fourth or fifth floor of a building. It turned out he overreacted, her dad fell from two storeys.

In the middle of their wedding night, Ting’s dad was trailing a thief he’d been following for several nights and was going to bust the thief in action. At the time Ting Ting held Putt Putt deep in sleep in the wedding suite, her dad’s eyes focused on the thief’s movements like a flashlight.

The thief had nimble limbs. When the thief was surrounded the thief found an escape and sped off. Her dad pursued the thief, heroically leapt over the balcony but was unfortunate that her dad’s leg got tangled then fell down head first from the balcony and was unconscious on the spot.

After Ting’s dad was conscious at the hospital he blamed Ting’s mum for overreacting over a minor incident that made his daughter and son-in-law alarmed enough to sacrifice their honeymoon.

Her mum’s eyes were swollen, head bowed and hands draped a blanket over her dad’s body.

Zhang Yu pursed her lips. ‘About that... I’m sorry, it was me that called Song Song...’

Ting's dad kept silent and Qin Yun who was sitting on the sofa nearby looked away from them.

'It's good everyone's well! Have you all eaten lunch? I can call someone to deliver food,' Qin Song said to break the awkward atmosphere.

Zhang Yu's eyes lit. 'Song Song call Golden Age to deliver food. There's a dining table in the adjoining room. We can head over to the dining table and celebrate Song Song and Ting Ting's first meal together as a married couple.'

The three Han family members wore solemn expressions and were silent. Qin Song sighed and Qin Yun's head was still turned away to remain a neutral bystander.

End of Chapter Two (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Two (Part 2)

Han Ting Ting and Qin Song's honeymoon was postponed. Qin Song decided to cancel leave and returned to work. Han Ting Ting stayed at home and did housework. The new home was one of Qin Song's many properties in an upscale district. The house was one hundred and fifty metres wide and furnished with luxurious fittings. Qin Song occupied the entire upstairs area and she lived downstairs. Out of fear their fake marriage would be revealed they didn't hire any servants. Han Ting Ting didn't mind, she reasoned the house belonged to Qin Song and she got free lodging so it was fair that she did the housework.

With responsibilities clearly split between Han Ting Ting and Qin Song, their married days flew by faster than a chicken flapping and a dog pouncing.

Ting's dad had six stitches on his forehead and his old wounds on his left leg ached whilst he was in the hospital for a week. After discharge, his left leg was still sore and had to rest at home for a while. Han Ting Ting visited her parents' home each day after cleaning Qin Song's house.

There were no buses or taxis operating in Qin Song's district. In the mornings Qin Song drove Ting Ting to the bus stop. In the afternoons she returned home before him and prepared meals for him to eat after work. But after a few days of taking taxis home, she was distressed she wasted fifty dollars on taxi fares. Then she decided to take three buses and walk forty minutes. By the time she arrived home his stomach rumbled out of hunger.

She felt guilty he had to wait long. 'I'll go cook straight away.'

He made a long face and chucked car keys at her. 'Tomorrow you drive yourself to your parents' home! Then drive yourself back here!'

She was startled but returned the car keys. 'I don't know how to drive.'

'You have a car license!' he said.

How dare 'little country bun' lie to him. When they first met on her record stated that she was a preschool teacher, owned a grade eight piano certificate

and had a type c driver's license.

'I do have a car license...' she said weakly. 'But it doesn't mean I can drive...'

Back in her old district she was forced to get a car license by that person. It took her eight attempts to pass the theory test and it wasn't necessary to recount what happened during her practical test. Finally after an ordeal she received a car license that person was more elated than she was, praised that she was smart and gave her a new G500 car model for her to drive. She drove it for less than ten minutes and almost hit the curve if that person didn't take control of the steering wheel and changed direction. The front of the car was scraped but no car accident happened.

After she regained her wits, that person rubbed her head and smiled.

'It's my fault, Ting Bao you don't have a driver's instinct and skill set needed for driving. Forget it, I give up, I'll continue being your chauffeur!' that person said.

She was holding lotus roots and in a trance thinking about the past.

'Hey!' Qin Song said after he saw her blank eyes.

'Little country bun' was startled and dropped the lotus roots on Qin Song's toes.

'I'm... I'm... I'm sorry!' she stuttered. 'Are you hurt?'

Qin Song's face scrunched up out of pain and grimaced. 'Han Ting Ting!' He clenched his teeth. 'Tomorrow-morning-walk-to-the-bus-stop! I-don't-care-anymore!'

She didn't make a fuss about his rudeness but was more concerned about his pain. 'Does your foot hurt? Let me see!'

Threats had no effect on 'little country bun.' He was hurt physically and frustrated on the inside. He scowled, took his empty stomach and limped upstairs to take care of his foot injury.

The next day, breakfast included porridge and pickled vegetables too. But Qin Song only touched the shiny golden omelette on the plate in front of him like usual. He intended to enjoy the omelette then leave after breakfast without

looking back.

She finished washing the pots and sat next to him but he stood up to leave.

‘Drive carefully!’ she said.

Unexpectedly he gave her a glare.

After tidying up after breakfast, she locked the front door and headed to the bus stop. In front of the house a car drove beside her and the windows were wound down. It was her neighbour who had an adorable son named Xiao Tao. Xiao Tao’s father saw her walking and offered her a lift.

When she visited her parents’ home, her mum wasn’t home and her dad was laying in bed reading.

Her dad brushed his grey hair. ‘No, your mum went to the factory to bring work home.’

She recognised in her dad’s tone that he was uncomfortable about burdening her mum.

It was understandable that any man who was bedridden would feel uncomfortable for his wife to work in order to support the family household financially. She empathised with his plight but didn’t show it on the outside.

After chatting with her dad for a while, she went to buy food. When she brought food home she saw her mum was home. It was a humid day, her mum’s greying hair was sweaty and some of it clung to her worn out face.

‘Take a seat, let me go cook,’ her mum said and rubbed her face that was red hot from sunburn. ‘Look at how hot you are! Go get an ice pop from the freezer.’

She bought pork ribs to cook soup and the vegetables and mushrooms were fried. The three family members sat together and ate. Her parents’ chopsticks hovered back and forth over the plates of food but only picked up the vegetarian dishes.

She placed pork ribs into their bowls. ‘Dad, mum, eat the pork ribs too.’

Her mum smiled, transferred the pork ribs from her mum’s bowl to her her dad’s bowl. ‘Ancient hubby, you need to eat lots to nourish your injury and heal faster.’

‘Mum, you should eat meat too,’ she said and placed vegetarian dishes in front of her. ‘I’m on a diet to lose weight, I’ll eat the vegetables. Dad, mum, don’t hog the vegetables.’

Her mum laughed. ‘You’re not fat or too thin, you’re well balanced. Anyway your in-laws don’t want their daughter-in-law to be too thin, not good for bearing fruit.’

‘Yes mum!’ she said, nodded and smiled sweetly. ‘Qin Song’s mum often buys delicious food for me.’

Ting’s parents exchanged smiles and thought that their daughter married the right man.

Han Ting Ting felt burdened by their smiling faces. She silently bowed her head and ate.

Han Ting Ting learnt from yesterday to head straight to her parents’ home straight after house chores were done, otherwise her parents would need to toil too much. At three in the afternoon she rushed to her parents’ home. It was another humid day and her mum was busy assembling beads using little tweezers onto the fringe of a thick woolen shawl on her lap, it was tedious labour. Her mum was too scared to turn on the fan and after beading a portion of the fringe her mum gulped down a glass of water.

She took advantage of her alone time with her mum. ‘Dad resting at home, didn’t he receive any bonus or work compensation?’

Her dad was too righteous and never bothered to suck up to his superiors to make his work life easier. As a result he worked half a lifetime and was still only an ordinary cop, his superiors and colleagues both feared and marginalised him.

‘There is a little... you don’t need to worry about it,’ her mum said. ‘We’ve got by all these years. Now that you’re not living with us, it’s one less person to feed.’

‘Then why do you have to take on hard labour? Mum, what about the money you saved up for my wedding? Why aren’t you using it?’ she asked.

‘Your dad and I aren’t in desperate need of money. I’m only safekeeping your wedding money for you and Qin Song,’ she said and patted her hand. ‘Just because you married into a rich family, don’t take on bad habits like burning money on wasteful extravagant things!’

‘I haven’t...’ she muttered with her head down. ‘I better get going. I need to prepare meals before Qin Song’s back home from work.’

‘Oh, hurry home!’ her mum said. ‘Make sure you cook lots of delicious food, Qin Song works hard all day long.’

‘Yes mum, I know,’ she said and took off.

Qin Song wanted to rush home early, he’d never been so productive during a meeting before.

After the meeting Rong Yan stalled Qin Song and smiled teasingly. ‘Everyone take a good look at Qin Song, he looks like he regrets he can’t ride a cloud straight home.’

The big boss could sympathise with Qin Song’s eagerness. ‘He’s a newlywed, his impatience to leave is understandable.’

Black belly Chen Yu Bai was leisurely wiping his glasses. ‘Qin Song’s only started sampling a new taste, being impatient as him is perfectly normal.’

Li Wei Ran burst out laughing.

Qin Song heard their speculations and became enraged. He thumped the table. ‘You butt wipes! It’s you people that aren’t accustomed to that taste!’

Qin Song’s sworn brothers heard the sexual frustration in Qin Song’s tone and gave him pity looks. Then his sworn brothers took out their phones to either call or message their own warm family of a beautiful wife and children.

Qin Song could only silently swallow the injustice. He grabbed his briefcase and fled home.

Qin Song got home and wanted to cause trouble for ‘little country bun.’ Just because he wanted to get home early to force Ting Ting to cook, he was laughed at by those butt wipes.

At home, he saw an empty dining table and was ecstatic she didn't finish cooking.

'Han Ting Ting!' he said and took off his shoes at the same time. 'Did you walk home today?'

Han Ting Ting heard the doorbell and ran from the kitchen. She wore a green apron, which highlighted her white skin.

'Why are you home early from work?' she asked.

He concealed his amusement by wearing a dark expression and sat on the sofa and mercilessly hassled Ting Ting. 'Why isn't dinner ready?'

Han Ting Ting looked at the clock hung on the wall, it was four in the afternoon... who would eat dinner so early?

'Was the food you ate for lunch at work not appetizing?' she asked sympathetically. 'Wait for me a bit. I'll start frying the vegetables, it'll be quick. The soup is ready. I'll scoop a bowl of soup to ease your hunger.'

'No need!' he said.

A strange unfamiliar sensation he never felt before stayed with him even after dinner was cooked made his heart itch continuously.

She scooped for him a bowl of chicken and mushroom soup and put the bowl next to his arm. He was startled, lifted his head to stare at her and she tensed.

'What's wrong?' she asked and touched her face in case there was something stuck on her face.

He took a deep breath, choked and looked away. In his confused state he waved the chopsticks wildly at the soup. 'It's too greasy! I don't want to eat it.'

'But yesterday you said the vegetable soup was too bland,' she said and sipped the chicken soup broth to taste. 'Doesn't taste greasy. I skimmed off the oily top layer already.'

She dared to talk back at him? He frowned. 'Your cooking sucks!'

She awkwardly lowered her head. 'Then... tomorrow I'll go to your parents' home to learn how to cook the dishes you like eating.'

She dared to use his parents to threaten him! He slammed his chopsticks on the table and glared at 'little country bun.'

His icy condescending look made her feel she was out of her element. The steam of chicken and mushroom floated into the tensed atmosphere. She thought about yesterday's lunch at her parents' home how they had to be frugal about a bowl of pork rib soup made her heart ache. Compared to Qin Song, she didn't have enough resources to provide food and clothing for her parents. Not only that, she made her parents who were at an advanced age had to move from their country house to a distant and cruel city.

'Hey...' he said.

'Little country bun' was crying. Did he go too far?

'What are you crying for...' he asked. 'I hate girls who cry in front of me!'

She rubbed her eyes and was still sobbing. 'I... didn't ask you... to like me.'

He choked. 'Don't cry anymore!'

He passed her a tissue. 'The truth is... you cook delicious food, I was only kidding before.'

'Not funny at all!' she said.

The tissue in her hand was soaked. She was about to reach out for another tissue, but he stood up and put the box of tissues in front of her.

'In the morning when you went out, did you walk to the bus stop again?' he asked.

He thought that one criticism about how her cooking was hard to swallow couldn't have made her cry that much. Was she still mad at him for driving to work in the morning and not giving her a lift to the bus stop?

She was startled and looked up. 'No I didn't walk. In the morning Xiao Tao's father from next door gave me a lift to the bus stop.'

Once again he was taken by surprise... his threats were useless against her. Who was Xiao Tao's father? He'd never known there was someone living next door.

She saw that his complexion wasn't good and thought that he must have felt guilty and hastily explained. 'I'm not crying because of you.'

He heard the sound of his crushed ego and looked away.

After Qin Song found out why 'little country bun' was crying, he thought it was a ridiculous reason.

'You can give money to aunty. I've given you your allowance already,' he said.

In his view, problems that could be solved by using money weren't problems.

'That's your money,' she said and cried until her nose turned red. 'I know you're a wealthy and a generous person. But you and I aren't in a real marriage. You don't have any responsibility toward my parents. I can't take money from you.'

'Do you have money?' he asked and gave 'little country bun' a conceited glance.

'I don't,' she said and shook her head in despair.

She didn't have money at all. When she was preparing for the wedding, Zhang Yu without consulting her had quit her job at her old preschool on her behalf. Her old boss politely settled three month pay for her and she gave it to her mum for the wedding preparations.

Ting Ting's sunken despair made Qin Song's childish heart bounce high.

'Ok,' he said. 'Don't cry anymore. I'll think of a way to help you. Do you want me to lend you money? Or do you want me to find a job for you?'

She looked pitifully at him. 'I can go to work?'

His family wouldn't want to their daughter-in-law to be seen working outside the house.

He lifted his chin with confidence. 'Leave it to me.'

Her eyes shone of admiration toward him.

It was the first time after they were married that he felt proud of himself.

End of Chapter Two (Part 2)

Related

part 3

Chapter Two (Part 3 of 3)

Continually doing good deeds would gradually become addictive. When a giver could witness the joy and gratitude from the receiver the giver felt instant gratification, which would simmer the desire to continue giving. It was the addictive feeling of being needed. For Qin Song who was simple hearted that primitive human desire to be needed was particularly strong.

The next day, he made an exception and didn't cause trouble for her. He took the initiative to offer her a lift to the bus stop. When she got out of the car she smiled and waved goodbye to him. He gave her a manly wave.

Throughout that day, Liang's employees from top to bottom clearly saw Qin Song's good mood, anyone who greeted him, he would nod and smile their way.

Rong Yan rubbed his chin and he felt he understood Qin Song's good mood.

'Eating meat can indeed rejuvenate the body and mind!' Rong Yan said.

When Han Ting Ting was preparing to go to her parents' house she received a call from Qin Song.

'Are you at your parents' home?' Qin Song asked.

'Mmm. I'm heading home to cook for you now,' she said gently.

On his end he was grinning. 'No need. I'll head to your parents for dinner then I'll drive us home together.'

She hung up the phone and her mum grilled her.

'Was that Qin Song?' her mum asked.

She was still stupefied and nodded. 'Mum, he wants to have dinner here.'

Her mum's reaction mirrored her own.

Then her mum sprung to action and spring cleaned the whole house. Her poor dad who was still recovering from his injury was no match for her mum's brooms

and mops. Her dad was chased outside the house, wandering for hours under the giant tree in the backyard.

When Qin Song parked downstairs the Han's family home was sparkling clean and filled with fragrant food aromas.

'Why did you only buy enough food for a week?' her mum said.

Her mum was stir-frying chicken whilst nagging her.

'Go see if your dad's done changing his clothes. Grab your dad's underwear and put it in the washing machine. Ah, Ting Bao! Go wash your face. There's sweat and grease stains on your face,' her mum said.

'Mum, don't stress out!' she said. 'Qin Song's easy going.'

'Tonight's the first time he's eating here. Dinner needs to be properly prepared. Quickly go wash your face,' her mum said.

'I know... Mum, don't make too many meat dishes. He doesn't like eating meat. Mum go and put the meat back in the fridge, used it to cook dishes for dad to eat tomorrow,' she said.

'He doesn't eat meat? What else doesn't he like eating? What about this dish? Will he eat this dish?' her mum asked.

'He eats everything... He'll eat any dish,' she said.

'Ahem...' her dad coughed and cleared his throat.

Her dad had brought her mum's awaited son-in-law into the house and overheard their conversation.

She turned around and saw Qin Song stood behind her dad and he narrowed his eyes to glare at her.

She dared to ruin his precious gentleman image... that 'little country bun!' It was her that ate anything she was given! She was the pig!

Before marriage the Han family didn't interact much with Qin Song. But sitting together around the lively dinner table the two Han elders thought that kiddo Qin Song was decent, spoke eloquently and treated everyone with kindness and friendliness.

Her mum put a chicken leg in Qin Song's bowl before she could stop her mum. Qin Song didn't like people putting food into his bowl. Unexpectedly Qin Song buried his head and ate the chicken leg.

'Does it taste good?' her mum asked and smiled brightly at the favoured son-in-law.

Qin Song wisely nodded, his eyes were gentle and his attitude was sincere. 'It's delicious!'

Her mum was overjoyed and put the last chicken leg into Qin Song's bowl. When her parents weren't watching him, he gave her a triumphant look. She picked apart the chicken wing in her bowl and silently ate.

After dinner Qin Song and her dad chatted amongst themselves in the living room. She brought them a tray of fruits and went back to the kitchen to wash dishes with her mum.

Her mum was used to her dad who rarely talked so it was good to see him animatedly converse with their son-in-law.

'That kiddo Qin Song is a good catch!'

'Mmm... uh...' she muttered.

She silently thought if only her parents could witness him in action when he was playing out his no good childish antics.

Suddenly her mum's body became still.

'Ting Ting!' her mum said and grimaced. 'You're not still... hankering for that person?'

'Mum!' she said and couldn't restrain the loudness of her voice. 'Not at all!'

'What's there to shout about?' Her mum almost used a soapy hand to cover her loud mouth. 'If your dad hears you, it won't be good.'

She choked and lowered her head.

Qin Song had stepped into the kitchen at that moment.

'What's wrong?' he asked and looked at her.

She didn't say anything, silently wiped her hands and left the kitchen.

He had glared at ‘little country bun’s’ retreating back and turned around with a gentle expression to give Ting’s mum a credit card.

‘Mum, this is for you,’ he said.

Ting’s mum saw the credit card and hurriedly declined.

‘No need, no need at all! You’ve already given too many expensive things! In the future when you come over to eat don’t bring anything at all. We’re all one family. No need to be polite!’ Ting’s mum said.

‘No trouble at all. Mum, take it. It’s for buying food. In the future Ting Ting and I will come here often to eat,’ he said.

‘Why’s that? Is Ting Ting’s cooking not good?’ Ting’s mum asked with eyes widened.

‘That’s not it!’ he said and smiled gently like a wise kid. ‘At home it’s just Ting Ting and I. She’s always cooking at home first before coming here. It’s much easier if we all eat here.’

Ting’s mum was deeply moved. Ting mum thought that Qin Song hadn’t been married for long but already knew how to be considerate of his wife’s distress.

‘Mum take it or each time Ting Ting and I come over to eat we’ll feel guilty!’ he said, tucked the card into Ting’s mum’s pocket and patted Ting’s mum’s shoulder. ‘Mum, keep a secret between us, your cooking taste much better than Ting Ting’s cooking!’

‘Hey kiddo!’ Ting’s mum said, smiled and patted his arm. ‘I get it now. The two of you must come here to eat often. I’ll cook lots more delicious food!’

End of Chapter Two (Part 3 of 3)

Related

Chapter Three

Chapter Three

Qin Song kept his promise. The following Monday 'little country bun' started her first day at her new workplace. The preschool was located in the same district as where Qin Song and Han Ting Ting lived together. Han Ting Ting could walk there within twenty minutes. She was responsible for teaching the eight oldest pre-schoolers how to sing and dance. Her new pay rate was three times that of her old preschool.

The truth was Qin Song was the investor of the district they lived in and getting her employed in the preschool was a cinch. But he never told Han Ting Ting how he got her the job that way she'd be grateful enough to be willing to sacrifice her life for him.

Han Ting Ting was an honest person. After Qin Song found her a job she was eternally grateful to Qin Song. From that day onward Qin Song was treated like the king of the castle in their home. She looked after his every need and revered him with all her heart.

There were many everyday events that happened that attracted them together and brought them closer.

On the first weekend of each month was a reunion weekend for all of Qin Song's relatives on his mother's side to meet up. Before they got married, Han Ting Ting met up with the Zhang household members twice. The first weekend they visited the Zhang household as a married couple was the third time.

The private road leading up to the Zhang mansion didn't allow cars to pass through. Only Qin Song who relied on his status as Commander Zhang's youngest and most doted on grandchild dared to drive his car all the way to the Zhang mansion.

The guards at the gate from the distance recognised the youngest master's car and only raised their hands for the car to stop as pretence.

'Qin Song!' Han Ting Ting said. Even though she scraped through her driving

theory test on her eighth attempt, she was a law abiding citizen. 'You need to stop the car over there!'

Qin Song dismissed 'little country bun' and drove straight through the gate.

'On both sides of the road are trees and lots of small animals. Last time I saw a rabbit crossing the road. What benefit do you get from driving through the road and scaring the small animals?' Han Ting Ting asked. 'Take a look, everyone else parked over there then walking to the mansion.'

'You're annoying!' he grumbled, turned the steering wheel around and grudgingly parked the car in the designated parking.

'Oh, Sang Sang! Have a look, is that really our young Qin master?' Li Wei Ran asked.

'Nonsense!' Qin Sang teased.

'That's right. The young Qin master that we know usually park his car in front of the living room before he's willing to get out of his car,' Li Wei Ran quipped.

Li Wei Ran and Qin Sang approached them. Qin Song creased his forehead and was about to retaliate but Han Ting Ting beside him greeted them before he opened his mouth.

'Fifth brother, Sang Sang!' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting's gracious reaction stopped Li Wei Ran and Qin Sang's sarcastic remarks in their tracks. Qin Song stood on the sidelines and watched them in a bind, they had no choice but be polite with his 'little country bun' around. Inside his heart he laughed with glee. His Ting Ting was thick skinned but had sharp claws, Li Wei Ran and Qin Sang wouldn't dare bully him whilst he was under Ting Ting's protection.

Zhang Yu was Commander Zhang's youngest daughter. Zhang Yu had an older sister, Zhang Pu. Zhang Pu was beautiful and smart. Zhang Pu was both more gentle and understood social decorum better than Zhang Yu. Like Zhang Yu, Zhang Pu only gave birth to one son who was Li Wei Ran. The two first cousins Li Wei Ran and Qin Song grew up together, but their bond surpassed that of blood brothers.

Li Wei Ran married a classic willowy beauty, Qin Sang. Qin Sang and Zhang Pu were cast from the same ladylike mold and for that reason Zhang Yu was not fond of either of them.

Han Ting Ting's social background was different to Qin Song. When Ting Ting's grandpa was still Commander Zhang's guard, her grandpa's relationship with everyone in the Zhang household was good. Both Zhang Pu and Zhang Yu called her grandpa, 'uncle Han' endearingly. After she married Qin Song, her bond with the Zhang household grew closer and everyone doted on her. Commander Zhang advised her many times. 'Ting Ting, if Song Song dares to bully you don't go soft on him. Come to me straight away and I'll take out my horse whip to give him a treat.'

'Ha!' Qin Song grunted.

Han Ting Ting's back shot up and she spoke up for him. 'Qin Song treats me well. He won't bully me!'

Zhang Yu heard Ting Ting's backing Song Song and smiled cheekily. 'Why am I always hearing Qin Song this and Qin Song that? Do the two of you still call each other formally at home?'

Han Ting Ting blushed red. Qin Song saw her blushing and wrapped an arm around Ting Ting's shoulder. Qin Song pulled her closer to his chest, intimately leaned his forehead onto her forehead. 'No one's a stranger here, you don't need to be embarrassed.'

Most likely because it was a cold day and that was why Qin Song's embrace gave Ting Ting a warm feeling. Qin Song's boyish charm made her more flustered and her tongue kept knotting.

'Song Song!' Ting Ting said after several attempts.

The newlyweds' sweet shyness made everyone around them smile happily. The elders grinned from ear to ear and encouraged Ting Ting to act casual around them. Ting Ting mumbled a casual greeting to each person in the room.

Zhang Yu glared at Zhang Pu in contempt. 'Zhang Pu has a daughter-in-law too. Why is everyone bullying my daughter-in-law? When Qin Sang married into our family, no one forced Qin Sang to greet each person in such a manner. Stop

picking on my honest Ting Ting.'

Zhang Pu had no intention of stopping the teasing and pretended Zhang Yu was invisible.

Qin Sang noticed the tension between the Zhang sisters and averted everyone's attention. 'Ting Ting, how's your dad's health? Is he stable now?'

'Ha!' Zhang Yu grumbled. 'Ting Ting's dad recovered long ago. He's back at work already.'

'Ting Ting, ask your mum to come over often whenever she's free. Now that you're married, your mum would be bored by herself at home,' Zhang Yu said. 'Song Song, make sure you take Ting Ting to visit her parents often. They gave away their only daughter to you. You need to look out for them more.'

Qin Song was busy playing with 'little country bun's' arm and hand that he inadvertently blurted out their secret. 'We go over there for dinner every day.'

'Both of you eat dinner there every day?' Zhang Yu asked out of shock.

Qin Song realised his tongue slipped and immediately smiled sweetly. 'Mum... Ting Ting's working now so we don't frequently travel about anymore and we'll be staying home to eat.'

'You two go there every day...' Zhang Yu said. Zhang Yu's disappointed look was evident. 'Why didn't you take me too? I like eating spicy dishes Ting Ting's mum makes lots!'

Qin Yun was used to Zhang Yu's backward outbursts and awkwardly coughed twice. Zhang Yu's relatives were too embarrassed and faced away.

Commander Zhang was used to sleeping early. After dinner everyone left. Qin Song was the last to leave. When Qin Song and Han Ting Ting walked out the door the sky was pitch black, the atmosphere was good and the moonlight shone on the private road Qin Song and Han Ting Ting strolled along. Qin Song stayed silent. He was particularly quiet the whole day unlike his usual lively self. Han Ting Ting noticed he wanted to maintain the tranquillity, she too silently walked side by side with him. The moonlight shimmered on the long road and tree

branches swayed in the wind.

‘Be careful!’ Qin Song shouted suddenly.

Han Ting Ting was scared out of her wits. Her arms automatically braced Qin Song and hid behind his back with a pale complexion.

Qin Song saw his mission accomplished, he let out a bout of laughter.

‘Hey!’ the ‘little country bun’ who was usually easy going, lost her temper. ‘Why did you scare me?’

Qin Song laughed even more boisterous.

Han Ting Ting looked at him condescendingly. ‘You’re such a kid!’

Qin Song scrunched his eyebrows. ‘Is your skin itchy? You dare to boldly talk back?’

Han Ting Ting didn’t say anything. She opened her eyes wide and stared at him. Qin Song didn’t mind having a staring contest with anyone before and stared straight back at her.

Perhaps it was the beautiful moonlight or from staring at each other for a long time or some other reason made Qin Song felt the usual young doll face in front of him was transformed into... an unfamiliar beautiful face.

‘Ahem,’ Qin Song coughed and broke eye contact. ‘Let’s go home!’

Han Ting Ting was like a well behaved kid, she saw that Qin Song admitted defeat and didn’t boast about it. She forgave Qin Song and obediently ‘ran little steps’ behind him.

The reason behind why she ‘ran little steps’ was because Qin Song’s legs were too long and he still held her hand as he took strides.

Playing newlyweds the whole day, the two people had fully immersed themselves into their roles.

The following day was a Sunday and both Qin Song and Han Ting Ting didn’t need to go to work.

Han Ting Ting made breakfast and went upstairs to wake Qin Song for

breakfast. Inside Qin Song's room was quiet, she surveyed his room a while and didn't see anyone and thought he was out jogging. She went into the bathroom to collect his dirty laundry for washing. To her surprise she opened the door and saw someone stripped down to their white underwear flexing their chest muscles in front of the mirror.

'You...' Qin Song said frozenly.

'I...' Han Ting Ting was also paralysed.

A long time later the two people involved regained control of their muscles. One person stayed hidden in the bathroom and the other person ran outside the bathroom. In their recent state of embarrassment... the person outside had slammed into the bedroom door that was half opened and the person hiding in the bathroom jumped into a tub without water. Following the harmonised loud banging sounds the two embarrassed people were groaning in pain.

Qin Song stiffly walked downstairs, Han Ting Ting was sitting in a daze at the dining table eating with her head buried into the bowl of porridge.

Ting Ting's face was flushed pink and the sunlight shone behind her back and shimmered pink silhouettes on the dining table, it gave the illusion that Ting Ting was a serene beauty. It was like her brightness struck straight through Qin Song's eyes. He stood stunned for a while before sitting down and lowering his head to eat silently.

Qin Song thought that Ting Ting was an innocent maiden and the morning incident was unintentional and decided not to make a fuss about it with her. But in the afternoon, he went into her room and 'accidentally' discovered Ting Ting had recounted the morning incident to Tu Tu.

'How's the size of his package?' Tu Tu had texted to Ting Ting's phone.

What a pervert! Qin Song lost his temper and his shaky hands opened Han Ting Ting's outbox to see what she replied.

'One... big package!' Ting Ting texted to Tu Tu's phone.

Lightning struck Qin Song's hand, he was paralysed on the spot.

Ok, at least 'little country bun' was honest.

When Qin Song was about to close out of the outbox, the phone beeped and a text from Tu Tu appeared on the screen.

'No picture, no evidence,' Tu Tu texted.

'Evidence your head!' Qin Song within a blink texted a reply.

The moment Qin Song pressed sent, he got a bad feeling and before he deleted the text the phone rang, it was Tu Tu.

Suddenly the bathroom door opened. Qin Song chucked the ringing phone outside the window.

'Ah...' Han Ting Ting was startled at the sight of Qin Song. 'What are you doing in my room?'

'I... I,' Qin Song choked. 'Why didn't you collect my dirty laundry to wash?'

Han Ting Ting's face flushed red. Since practically seeing Qin Song naked in the morning and then running downstairs, she didn't dare go back upstairs.

'I think I heard my phone rang,' she said and fumbled around looking for her phone to hide her embarrassment.

'What ring tone?' he said. 'You heard wrong.'

She stood straight and looked up to stare at him.

He couldn't bear her intense stare and was about to open his mouth to confess but her nodding stopped him.

'That's possible... I do mishear things,' she said.

His heart let out a sigh of relief.

'But where's my phone?' she asked and looked for her phone. 'Qin Song, can you call my phone... oh, where are you running to?'

Han Ting Ting's phone had disappeared.

'Hey! This is for you!' Qin Song said.

Qin Song came back from 'jogging' and gave Ting Ting a new phone with a pink

cover.

‘No need. This morning I was texting Tu Tu. It must be somewhere in my room. I’ll take another look,’ Ting Ting said and waved her hands to decline the new phone.

‘Ha!’ he grunted.

He kept his arm stretched out in front of ‘little country bun’ and grimaced.

Ting Ting saw that Qin Song’s complexion wasn’t good, hesitated for a while and accepted the new phone. The truth was she adored the pink shade of the phone cover to bits! She held the phone in her hand and looked at all its features. It was too adorable to let go.

‘But my contact list is on my old phone,’ she said. ‘Now I can’t contact Tu Tu.’

Someone’s heart silently felt... it was better you couldn’t contact Tu Tu.

‘What was Tu Tu’s number? 139... 611... 54... 540...’ Han Ting Ting mumbled but couldn’t remember.

‘We’re running late!’ Qin Song said coldly.

‘Oh!’ she gasped.

‘Little country bun’ jumped and ran into her room to change her clothes.

Qin Song rubbed his chest and escaped a confrontation.

‘Ah, that’s right!’ she said and suddenly turned around.

Qin Song who was sighing in relief, tensed up again.

‘What are you shouting about?’ he asked and grimaced.

Han Ting Ting stuck out her tongue and waved her new phone. ‘Thank you for giving me this beautiful phone!’

It was the first time she acted lively in front of Qin Song. The tip of her tongue was red and pink and it made his tongue dry.

‘No need for thanks! That phone was mine. I don’t need it anymore and let you have it,’ he said.

Han Ting Ting widened both her eyes... that colour? Qin Song liked the colour

pink!

Qin Song's outburst made him wanted to bite off his own tongue. He was too distraught and became speechless. One hand covered his face and the other hand waved at her to urge her to go change clothes quickly.

On the way, Qin Song talked about the wives of the other Liang's sworn brothers.

'Big boss' wife, Gu Yan is brutally blunt. Unless necessary, stay out of Gu Yan's way. Rong Yan's wife, Ye Mu is a little beast. Ye Mu's as shady as Rong Yan who's in charge of entertainment... long story short, no need to be close with Ye Mu. Black belly Chen Yu Bai's wife, An Xiao Li is a dummy. Keep your distance from her to prevent your IQ from deteriorating,' Qin Song said.

'What about Qin Sang?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Qin Song accidentally ran a red light, grumbled something and pretended he didn't hear Ting Ting's question.

Han Ting Ting discovered the truth. Out of wives of the Liang's sworn brothers, Qin Sang was the deadliest. Even Gu Yan who was meant to be brutal had to obediently listen to Qin Sang. After Qin Sang accompanied Han Ting Ting throughout the night to socialise, Han Ting Ting felt everyone were good people.

When the banquet winded down, Han Ting Ting went to the bathroom. She passed the hall and saw at the edge of the seating area, Qin Song was resting against a column. Beside Qin Song stood an exotic beauty in a tight silver dress. She saw Qin Song said something to the beauty and heard an alluring laugh... that face... that smile... gave Han Ting Ting a familiar feeling. She recalled the ice-cream incident involving Zhang Yu and then realised the beauty beside Qin Song was the same lady with him at the cafe that day!

'Ting Ting!' Qin Sang called. 'What's wrong?'

'Nothing... nothing at all!' Han Ting Ting said and pulled Qin Sang's arm to leave.

Qin Song turned his body around and saw Han Ting Ting with Qin Sang. Qin

Song's expression looked a bit uncomfortable. His beautiful girlfriend smiled charmingly.

'Hello Mrs Qin junior,' Chen Yun said.

Han Ting Ting pitied Chen Yun, because Chen Yun had to politely greet the current wife of the man Chen Yun loved and also maintain a charming smile.

'Hello Chen Yun. You can call me Ting Ting,' Han Ting Ting said.

'We met on your wedding day with executive Qin junior. You were a beautiful bride!' Chen Yun said.

What a waste! Han Ting Ting felt heartbroken for the beautiful pair of lovebirds. Why wasn't the bride who married Qin Song wasn't Chen Yun... What was wrong with Chen Yun that didn't satisfy Qin Song's parents' expectations?

'Ahem!' Qin Song coughed. 'If you two have something else to do, go ahead. I have business to discuss with Chen Yun.'

The main male lead found the courage to speak up for his love! Han Ting Ting's heart was deeply moved.

Qin Sang was observing from the sidelines. Qin Sang forced a smile and pulled Han Ting Ting's arm. 'Then we'll head off!'

On the way back, Qin Song was abnormally silent like that day at Commander Zhang's mansion.

Han Ting Ting's heart pitied Qin Song's predicament. Qin Song had to witness the beauty in his heart pitifully sneak around. Of course Qin Song would be in a bad mood and couldn't help but grimace at Han Ting Ting.

'Qin Song!' she called gently. 'Don't feel sad! A year will fly by!'

'What are you talking about?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song's soul was wandering thousands of miles away. When he was alert again he couldn't understand what was the meaning behind Ting Ting's words.

'I'll help you! If you want to see her it won't be a problem. I'll help you keep it a secret from your parents,' Han Ting Ting said.

'What nonsense are you talking about?' he asked coldly.

She sighed. 'Qin Song! You've helped me a lot. We're friends. No problem at all. I won't reveal your secret to anyone.'

The cold streetlights swept passed Qin Song's face, his beautiful lips were pursed and it was a while before he opened his lips.

'Who told you? My mum?' he asked.

'Your mum didn't... she didn't!' she hastily explained in defence of her loveable mother-in-law. 'I witnessed it myself. Qin Song, truly it doesn't matter! I don't know the specific circumstances but I understand you. You're a good person. If you love her then you have your own reasons why!'

'I don't love her... at least now I don't love her anymore!' he said.

At the red light, he stopped the car and hit the stirring wheel to vent. 'My situation can't be explained clearly... I don't know what sort of voodoo possessed me back then.'

'I understand that feeling, making an impulsive mistake and when looking back can see how absurd it was!' she said from the bottom of her heart.

Qin Song exhaled. 'That's right, really ridiculous...'

'No matter what, cheer up!' she said and patted the shoulder of the person on the same boat as her. 'Chen Yun and you make a beautiful couple. If you really love her then after a year there'll be an opportunity!'

'Chen Yun?' Qin Song asked. 'What about Chen Yun?'

'Of course... Chen Yun...' she said weakly after she saw his scowl.

Perhaps Chen Yun's name was exclusively for him to call... and others aren't allowed to call Chen Yun's name.

Qin Song squinted his eyes and the gleam inside looked like it wanted to swallow 'little country bun' whole.

Why was he like that? He loved her that much that one time calling Chen Yun's precious name and he was angry to that extent... Han Ting Ting put her head down to avoid his scary gaze and minimise her existence.

The home phone was broken. The internet connection was useless too. The technician came over and had nothing but bad news.

‘Sorry Mrs Qin junior! Your phone and internet line are temporary disconnected,’ the technician said with a set of hair full of sweat.

The technician secretly glanced at Qin Song who wore a serious expression. It made the technician sweat more. The technician was responsible for Liang’s internet security not hardware maintenance. He didn’t understand why Qin Song dragged him here to look at a phone and modem that was perfectly fine, except their entire cores were taken out.

‘No problem at all!’ Han Ting Ting said.

She felt uncomfortable being called Mrs Qin junior. ‘We don’t need the home phone or internet urgently. You can take your time to fix it.’

Qin Song coughed and cleared his throat. ‘You can go. I’ll let you know when it’s a convenient time for you to come back to fix the phone and internet.’

The technician left and an annoyed Han Ting Ting probed the modem’s exterior.

Qin Song’s eyes were alarmed but he summoned a neutral tone. ‘He was a professional and couldn’t fix it. What are you fiddling it for?’

She turned off the power then turned it on again. ‘That’s strange. It’s been working fine for the last few days. Then suddenly both the home phone and internet stopped working...’

‘They share the same network,’ he said. ‘You work during the day. At night you can watch tv to relax after you’re done with housework. Whether the home phone and internet is connected or not doesn’t matter.’

‘But... I can’t get into contact with Tu Tu. I can’t remember her phone number and can’t go online to chat with her either,’ she said. ‘What do I now?’ She held her chin and an idea popped into her head. ‘Tomorrow I’ll bring my laptop to school and can go online.’

Qin Song choked on the cup of tea he was drinking. How was he going to tamper with ‘little country bun’s’ laptop so she couldn’t contact Tu Tu to find

out what happened to her old phone?

Qin Song stayed awake all night thinking of ways to tamper with 'little country bun's' laptop but by morning there were no opportunities left.

He was getting ready to go to work when Han Ting Ting's new phone rang. He picked it up for her.

'Hello,' he said.

'Is that you Song Song?' Ting's mum asked and sounded surprised.

'Mum!' he said sweetly. 'Morning mum!'

'Uh, morning! Song Song, Where's Ting Ting?' Ting's mum said.

Han Ting Ting was washing the dishes in the kitchen and ran out to retrieve her ringing phone.

'Hey,' he said and passed her the phone. 'It's mum.'

'Um,' she said.

She was wiping her hands. He leaned the phone to her ear and his fingers brushed her soft skin... after she held the phone, he withdrew his hand but there was a strange sensation on his fingers. He swiftly turned away and put his head down to change his shoes.

'Mum!' she said and smiled. 'Did Tu Tu call your home phone?'

Qin Song's body froze whilst changing his shoes but his ears were perked up.

'No she didn't. You changed your number and you haven't told her?' Ting's mum asked.

'I haven't yet... Tu Tu won't remember your number. In the past we used our phones to contact each other... Don't worry mum. I remember I kept a phone book in my old room somewhere. There's Tu Tu's number and address too. I'll look for it tonight at your place after work,' she said.

'You can't!' he said and stood up. 'Tonight we promised to go eat dinner at my parents' house.'

‘What?’ she asked. ‘When did we promise?’

‘Last night I told you about it. What’s wrong? It’s been one night and you forgot already?’ he said.

Ting’s mum heard her hesitation on the other end of the phone.

‘Ting Bao, listen to Song Song. Don’t come over tonight. Each night both of you come over here for dinner and neglect his parents. That’s not a good thing,’ her mum said.

‘I know mum,’ she said and hung up the phone.

She was still suspicious. Last night did he really tell her about dinner plans at his parents? Why couldn’t she remember?

‘Ahem...’ he coughed.

His heart that jumped out of his chest had returned back inside his chest. ‘Hey, are you ready? Hurry up and change clothes. I’ll drive you to school on the way to work.’

‘Ok!’ she said and rushed to her room with a cardigan. On the way she kept mumbling to herself. ‘But I don’t remember anything...’

‘Little country bun’s’ confused state was really amusing, someone who stood behind her, had a heavy heart before changed into an elated heart when he was staring at her running into her room and his lips couldn’t help but curve upward.

End of Chapter Three

Related

Chapter Four

Chapter Four

In the afternoon, Qin Song called Zhang Yu and notified her that tonight he and Han Ting Ting were coming over their place for dinner. He asked Zhang Yu not to act surprised when they arrive. Unfortunately, he overestimated Zhang Yu. When he was holding hands with Han Ting Ting and walked through his parents' front door they saw Qin Yun in the living room reading a newspaper.

'Oh, why didn't you two call to say you were eating dinner here tonight?' Qin Yun asked.

Han Ting Ting's eyes widened and looked at Qin Song whose body stood completely straight. Zhang Yu was running joyfully to greet them. Zhang Yu's innocent smile momentarily froze then his mouth was closed as Zhang Yu ran behind Qin Yun's back to dodge the bullets shot by Qin Song's eyes.

Qin Yun saw his wife's frightened look behind his back and knew straight away Zhang Yu made a mistake.

'Are you two going to stand there all day?' Qin Yun asked. 'Come in, it's nearly dinner time. Zhang Yu, go ask the chef to cook dishes that Ting Ting likes to eat.'

Qin Yun looked at his wife to let her know she should take the opportunity to escape or she wouldn't live long enough to eat dinner.

'Ah... I ordered the dishes already. There's the sweet and sour prawns and fishes that Ting Ting likes to eat,' Zhang Yu said naively.

Zhang Yu didn't take advantage of the escape route her husband made for her.

Qin Yun annoyed that his good intentions couldn't be appreciated by his blank wife, walked to the dining room and didn't worry about her wellbeing anymore.

At the dining table, no one talked and each person sat in an awkward silence.

Qin Yun was a man with few words, he comfortably ate and didn't bother to pick up food for Zhang Yu.

Qin Song sipped a spoon full of soup and squint his eyes at Zhang Yu who had

her head buried into a bowl of rice.

Han Ting Ting felt the atmosphere was too tensed. She looked left then right, smiled and coughed twice to break the silence.

‘The sweet and sour fish is delicious!’ Han Ting Ting said.

‘Girls all love eating sweet dishes,’ Qin Yun teased and picked a fish portion to put into Zhang Yu’s bowl. ‘Ting Ting, if you like the food here then come over often.’

‘Yes, dad. Qin Song always tells me my cooking is no good and that I should come here to learn how to cook properly,’ Han Ting Ting said and made Qin Yun’s smile even warmer.

‘Qin Song, what have you been busy with at work lately?’ Qin Yun asked.

It was rare the father and son spoke to each other harmoniously.

Qin Song’s chopsticks that were scooping rice suddenly froze and he kept his head down.

‘Busy with my own business,’ Qin Song said coldly.

Qin Song treated his dad with indifference, different how he treated other people around him.

Qin Yun recognised his son’s attitude toward him and his rare smile faded away.

In the beginning the Zhang household searched for a decent girl to marry Qin Song, because Qin Yun’s health was poor and Qin’s company needed someone stable to inherit the head position. Han Ting Ting thought it was the same reason why Qin Song agreed to the arranged marriage. After interacting with Qin Song for a period she could see that wasn’t Qin Song’s real reason. He didn’t care about inheriting Qin’s company. But if he married her to comfort Qin Yun it didn’t make sense why the Qin father and son’s relationship was strained.

Even if Qin Yun was a stern dad and didn’t have anything in common to talk about with Qin Song... Qin Song’s personality was usually lively but he chose to keep a respectful distance with his own dad...

‘Ting Ting... Ting Ting!’ Zhang Yu called.

‘Ah,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting was deep in thought and was brought back by Zhang Yu’s serious tone. ‘What... What’s wrong?’

Zhang Yu saw that the father and son wore frozen faces and didn’t say anything but she wanted to express her grievances to her daughter-in-law.

‘I asked if you and Song Song can stay the night. After getting married, you two haven’t slept here before. Sleep here tonight and you and I can have a mother and daughter gossip session,’ Zhang Yu said.

If she slept here tonight... then she’d need to share a bed with Qin Song.

Qin Song saw her silent plea for help.

‘I want go home and sleep in our own bed,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Yun who was eating suddenly stood up and silently walked upstairs.

‘Song Song, your dad’s health isn’t good. Why do you have to provoke him? Sleeping over one night won’t kill you. You’ll be sleeping with your wife not with your father!’ Zhang Yu said.

‘When did I make dad angry?’ Qin Song asked and slammed his chopsticks on the table.

‘If you want to go home then get out of my sight!’ Qin Yun said and thumped the stair rail. ‘Zhang Yu, after you finish eating come upstairs with me and let them leave.’

Qin Yun’s outburst startled Han Ting Ting. She turned to Qin Song to see his reaction. His eyes were hard to read but he held the chopsticks tight enough for the veins on his hand to pop up.

‘Qin Song...’ she called him gently.

He lifted his head, his lips were still pressed together but his hand released the chopsticks.

A man that got to be called dad, was scary to what extent?

When Han Ting Ting was a kid she used to admire Tu Tu’s dad. Tu Tu’s dad

smiled a lot and told Tu Tu funny stories. Whatever Tu Tu did, Tu Tu's dad wasn't solemn or glared at Tu Tu. Tu Tu even dared to draw a mustache on him when he was sleeping then put a cold hand on his neck to laugh. Tu Tu's dad hugged Tu Tu, spun her around and praised Tu Tu. 'My daughter is smart and adorable!'

Tu Tu's dad nicknamed her 'Mao Mao' (plush toy), it was a funny nickname like Tu Tu was a little cute animal. Han Ting Ting was always envious of their father and daughter bond.

Han Ting Ting's dad was a stern and an intimidating dad like Qin Yun. If she was brutally honest her dad was a lot scarier than Qin Yun.

Han Ting Ting's dad wasn't talkative. He disciplined her with three methods – be furious, death stare and pound table. During her school days after each end of year exams, she'd cry anxious tears as she'd scoop a bowl of rice. But nearby her house Tu Tu's father would laugh and joke. 'Mao Mao, you failed again? Don't worry, it was me that failed to pass down my brilliance to you.'

The day after exam results she'd cry all the way to that person's house. That person would rub her head and offer comforting words. 'Ting Bao you failed? So did Tu Tu. Don't worry lots of your classmates failed too.'

She'd cry until she heard the magic bribe.

'Ok, don't crying anymore. Ting Bao, don't be too hard on yourself. Nearly everyone in your class failed because of the no good exam questions. Ting Bao, don't cry anymore and I'll take you to buy ice-cream,' that person said.

'Ok!' Han Ting Ting said.

Except for Putt Putt, no one else knew she hated eating ice-cream. She only picked up the habit of eating ice-cream whenever she was upset, because that person always bought her ice-cream to comfort her.

'Ping!' the microwave beeped.

Han Ting Ting slapped her cheeks to forget about that person. She opened the microwave, took out the warm glass of milk and walked upstairs.

Qin Song's bedroom door was wide opened. He was laying on his bed with his arms and legs stretched out and staring at the ceiling.

‘Qin Song!’ Han Ting Ting called and knocked on the door. ‘You only ate a bit during dinner. Are you hungry?’

‘Get out!’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting fumbled back away from the threshold of the door and only stuck her head through it. ‘Do you want to drink milk? It’s heated up.’

Qin Song sat upright and coldly looked at ‘little country bun.’ ‘You, come here!’

Han Ting Ting obediently brought the glass of milk into his room. But he didn’t take the glass from her. His arms were crossed and stared up at her. She was the one standing, but the way he stared up at her was as if he was the one standing and looking down at her. She felt a chill on her back and lowered her head.

Han Ting Ting was scared of Qin Song when he acted serious. During those times she realised she was married to Qin Song, the Qin household’s precious heir, Commander Zhang’s favourite grandchild and was a stakeholder of Liang’s company. No matter how sweet and childish Qin Song behaved, she couldn’t forget they didn’t belong in the same world.

‘Tell me,’ Qin Song said. ‘Was I the one who made my old man angry?’

Han Ting Ting lifted her head. ‘What?’

‘How did I make him angry?’ Qin Song asked.

‘You didn’t... I know you didn’t... I understand, it’s not that you didn’t want to sleep over their place, but your dad doesn’t know why,’ Han Ting Ting said and gave him the glass.

Qin Song gulped down the milk in one go, burped and gave the empty glass back to ‘little country bun.’

He laid back down on the bed, stared at the ceiling and was deep in thought.

‘Qin Song, dads and mums have a lot of differences. Most dads have trouble or too embarrassed to show that they care... it’s not that your dad doesn’t love you,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song’s forehead creased and he gave ‘little country bun’ a dagger.

‘Who did you say didn’t love who?’ Qin Song asked.

Han Ting Ting was startled and gulped down saliva.

‘I was talking about myself...’ Han Ting Ting said.

‘You’re such a fool, of course your dad doesn’t like you. What dad doesn’t like having a son?’ Qin Song said and propped his head up with his hands and arms.

Qin Song turned back to her. ‘Hey! Where are you going?’

Han Ting Ting’s back faced him and she was heading to the door.

‘Come back!’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song grabbed her arm and she was forced to sit down on the bed.

After an awkward silence, Qin Song opened his mouth. ‘Did you agree to go on a match making date to see me because your dad forced you?’

‘No my dad didn’t,’ Han Ting Ting said with her head down and shook a finger. ‘It was my choice.’

‘You’re lying. Doesn’t every girl want to marry someone decent?’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting’s body straightened. ‘Marrying you... is not marrying someone decent?’

What... Qin Song glared at ‘little country bun.’ She was dead meat! It was as if she didn’t talk back at him each day then she’d feel uncomfortable.

‘Han Ting Ting!’ Qin Song squint his eyes and grilled her. ‘Tell the truth. You’re in love with someone else right? Your parents were against you and him being together and you married me out of anger right?’

Qin Song used to think she was a gold digger. But when they were discussing about compensation he’d give her after they divorced, she refused to take anything from him. It made him realised she didn’t marry for money.

‘That’s not it. I wanted to get married quickly so my parents wouldn’t have to worry about me anymore. My parents have struggled a lot because of me,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting’s hands were fisted and whitened and her eyes had a layer of misty tears. ‘Besides, that person had never said he loved me. Nothing had

happened between him and me.'

Han Ting Ting scrunched her face, she was always uncomfortable remembering the past.

Qin Song had only made a wild guess and was surprised he'd hit the mark. His interest peaked, he sat up at shoulder level with her on the bed and egged her on. 'The two of you were never together? Then why would your parents move houses to stop you from running into him?'

Han Ting Ting was taken back. Her eyes swirled in circles as she tried to focus on Qin Song. Her dad had warned her that she wasn't allowed to talk about it to outsiders! How did Qin Song know?

'How did you know that my family moved houses to avoid him?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Your family was living comfortably in a rural district then suddenly your family moved far away and you were in a rush to find a husband. Of course it's not hard to guess why your family moved houses,' Qin Song said in his as-a-matter-of-fact tone.

Han Ting Ting wrinkled her forehead in distress and let out a long sigh. 'It's all my fault. I'm not good!'

Qin Song's curiosity raised a notch. 'Why aren't you good?'

'That person never said he loved me, it was a one sided love... I've always loved him. After my dad found out, he was furious. I was scared my dad would go look for that person and I'd be disgraced... that person didn't love me...' Han Ting Ting rattled on about her troubles that she'd never confided to anyone else but Putt Putt.

'Why was your dad against you having feelings for that person? Was it because he's married?' Qin Song asked.

Han Ting Ting nodded then shook her head. 'That person was married. He has a daughter named Dong. Dong's mum died giving birth to Dong. Dong Dong's adorable! She's like a beautiful doll!'

'Hey! Don't change the subject,' Qin Song said impatiently. 'Your dad was

against you being a step-mum to that person's child right?'

Han Ting Ting nodded. 'And... that person never said he liked me either. Whenever he worked overtime he'd ask me to look after Dong Dong, because Dong Dong is a student at my preschool.'

'Before you left, didn't you say one word to him?' Qin Song asked. 'If after you left silently and he was like you and hid his feelings, what are you going to do now?'

'That person wouldn't hide his feelings,' Han Ting Ting said dejectedly. 'That person loved Dong Dong's mum, a love that can't be replaced. I knew long ago, if I were to stay by his side for the rest of his life, in his heart I could never surpass Dong's mum. That person is too loyal.'

Qin Song pursed his lips and collapsed on the bed.

Han Ting Ting was in a state of self-pity thinking about the past. Her knees were bent and her chin rested on her knees. She looked like a pet waiting to be patted lovingly.

'Han Ting Ting!' Qin Song called and kicked her gently to get her attention. 'Your dad separating you two love birds, you don't resent him?'

'Of course I don't. That's my dad. I'll never resent my dad no matter what happens, he'll always want what's best for me,' Han Ting Ting said.

Little waves fluttered in Qin Song's eyes.

Han Ting Ting didn't discover Qin Song's mood and continued to confide in him. 'The way we see our love lives isn't the same way our parents see our love lives. Usually when parents say something isn't good for us is because they have their own reasons. Even if I'm upset, I still listen to their advice.'

The night had fallen, but it was particularly dark in that moment. Qin Song returned to the past events, his impulsive youth, did whatever that pleased him and causing that absurd mess... years later, he still couldn't face his past actions or avoid what would happen in the future either. The seriousness of his actions made him suffer and regretful... all because he didn't listen!

'Qin Song, did you get married because of your dad right? When I clean your

study room, I see a lot of research articles in English and they're all about lung cancer. It shows that you care a lot about your dad,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting lifted her head and saw Qin Song laid on his side with his back toward her. 'But why is it that you rarely chat with your dad? Like tonight at dinner. Your dad wanted to talk to you and show an interest in you but you shrugged him off.'

'A few years ago, my old man renounced our father and son relationship. Why would my old man still care about me?' Qin Song said coldly and stared up at the ceiling.

'Then you must have done something to make him that angry,' Han Ting Ting said.

'Even if he was angry, he shouldn't cast me aside like that. What sort of a dad sided with an outsider and didn't need his own biological son?' Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting felt that they chatted a lot more than usual and it wouldn't be good for her to stay longer. She picked up the empty glass, got off the bed and walked to the door.

Han Ting Ting got to the door and Qin Song suddenly opened his mouth again.

'That person loved his wife a lot, what traits does he have that makes you love him?' Qin Song asked.

Han Ting Ting stood still. 'Loving someone... it's hard to specify why clearly.'

Han Ting Ting paused to ponder Qin Song's question for a while. 'That person is handsome, good natured, tackles everything in a mature manner... when he started building his career he worked hard, he worked many late nights. Me and Dong Dong would pick him up from work, his office was scattered with documents and the dim lights twinkled, it was a beautiful sight. When he stepped out of the building he'd put on his jacket and the passing wind would flutter his jacket like he was from a martial arts novel. The wind blowing and the jacket fluttering...'

Qin Song hated 'little country bun's' love forlorn trance and hurriedly ushered her outside his room.

On an autumn's day, Qin Song was in a good mood packing up his office to leave. Then he put on his jacket and suddenly an image of 'the wind blowing and the jacket fluttering' sprung up and he remembered the look of 'little country bun's' love forlorn trance. It left an uncomfortable feeling in his heart. He scrunched his face and pushed the button to turn on the speaker phone. 'Today everyone needs to work overtime!'

'Ah!' Qin Song's secretary said.

'Give me all of the paper work scheduled for tomorrow and the whole week too!' Qin Song said in a serious tone.

'Yes, straight away,' Qin Song's secretary said.

Later that night, everyone was working hard at Qin's company. By the time it was half past seven at night, Qin Song couldn't stand it anymore and called home.

'Why haven't you called me to ask why I'm still not back from work? The night sky's been dark for a long time!' Qin Song said.

'Oh... why haven't you finish work yet?' Han Ting Ting asked.

On Han Ting Ting's end there were gurgling sounds of a baby. She was coaxing a baby boy whilst balancing her phone.

'I'm working overtime,' Qin Song said.

'Mmm... on the way home remember to buy baby formula and a teething brush. Don't forget!' Han Ting Ting said.

The baby boy was laughing gleefully and Han Ting Ting didn't hesitate to hang up the phone.

Qin Song grimaced and grudgingly hung up the phone. He vented his frustrations by scratching his work desk.

The autumn days gradually became colder as it approached winter.

Autumn arrived and Qin Song's birthday neared. Qin Song was an only child,

Commander Zhang's beloved grandson and a major stakeholder of Liang's company. That was why Qin Song's birthday each year was a glamorous event. The autumn that was here was a more special season, because it'd be Qin Song's first birthday celebration after marriage. Big boss Liang ordered Rong Yan to prepare a birthday banquet befitting of Qin Song's grandeur status.

When Qin Song was looking over his birthday guest list and made a special request to Rong Yan. 'Ask Chen Yun to bring along her husband and their daughter.'

Rong Yan narrowed his eyes and glanced at Qin Song. 'Do you need to give special treatment to Chen Yun's family?'

'It's not about compensating her for doing contract work for Qin's company...' Qin Song said. 'No matter what get her to bring her family.'

A disgruntled Rong Yan stood with the guest list in hand and left.

Qin Song by himself sat back on his chair and held his chin. Would the 'little country bun' understand at his birthday celebration that there was nothing going on between him and Chen Yun after she sees Chen Yun's family?

On Qin Song's birthday, Han Ting Ting woke up early, dressed and applied makeup.

When Qin Song walked downstairs to grab a glass of water, he was met with a rare sight. He saw a girl with her hair down to shoulder length in a white dress and the morning sunlight behind her silhouetted her body. His sleepy eyes became wide awake.

'You... what are you doing?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song was in disbelief that he didn't recognise the girl was 'little country bun.'

Han Ting Ting fiddled her dress and smiled shyly. 'Qin Song... do you think what I'm wearing is suitable?'

'Um, looks good. I'll take you to the hair salon in the afternoon to give your hair an up style, that way it'll show off your neck,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song didn't know why Ting Ting who had a small stature had such a long and slender neck that was appealing.

'What? We'll be going there in the afternoon?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'We don't need to get to the venue until night time,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song sat on the sofa, crossed his arms and looked at 'little country bun.' 'It's early morning and you're already decked out. Did you intend to strut in front of me all day?'

'I thought... we had to greet a bunch of guests or something...' Han Ting Ting said and bent her head.

'We're not getting married. Why would we need to greet guests?' Qin Song happily explained.

Qin Song thought 'little country bun' looked beautiful in her white dress. It illuminated her white skin and pink blush, like a fresh baked bun out of an oven. One look and anyone would have the urge to eat it... Qin Song coughed twice, stood and went to pour a glass of milk to cool his body down.

The doorbell rang. 'Little country bun's' face had turned red, she ran to the door and she nearly slammed into the door. Qin Song nearly spat out his milk as well.

The Xiao Tao father and son duo stood at the door in awe of Han Ting Ting who was dressed to the nines. Xiao Tao's dad was silent after a while.

'Oh, Miss Han... morning!' Xiao Tao's dad said.

'Morning!' Han Ting Ting said awkwardly. 'Is everything ok?'

'Ah... I need to go pick up Xiao Tao's mother from the airport. I wanted to ask if you could watch over Xiao Tao for a little a while, about three hours. But... will it inconvenienced you?' Xiao Tao's dad asked.

Han Ting Ting saw her neighbours checking her out up and down and didn't know where to place her hands.

Han Ting Ting didn't know when Qin Song came to the door either, until he had an arm wrapped around her shoulder.

‘Honey, what seems to be the problem?’ Qin Song asked.

Qin Song disliked critters talking too long with his ‘little country bun,’ especially when she was dressed... provocatively.

With Qin Song too close to Han Ting Ting, it made it hard for her to breathe and she wanted to bolt.

‘No trouble. I’m not busy with anything. Xiao Tao, come in dear,’ Han Ting Ting said.

She hastily farewell Xiao Tao’s dad and closed the door.

Xiao Tao held his aeroplane model, had his head up and stared at Han Ting Ting. ‘Miss Han, you look beautiful in that dress! Like a goddess!’

Han Ting Ting rubbed the little man’s head and her face blushed redder.

‘One is the same as another, there’s nothing beautiful!’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song felt even a juvenile critter monopolising his ‘little country bun’ made him uncomfortable.

‘Han Ting Ting, go change your clothes! How are you going to cook in that dress?’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting pulled her dress up and ran to her room.

Xiao Tao’s gaze followed the direction of Han Ting Ting’s fading body. ‘She looked really beautiful! Uncle, you’re not honest!’

‘What would a kid know? If you keep talking nonsense, tonight I’ll call for a monster to come eat you!’ Qin Song said.

‘Uncle...’ Xiao Tao said. ‘There’s no such thing as monsters! Why is uncle so childish?’

‘Ughh...’ Qin Song muffled, hid his face and went away...

Under the hands of a stylist, Han Ting Ting was like a blooming lotus flower after the rain, a pure beauty, forever fresh... Qin Song was in a trance watching her. His heart thought, how could a change in hairstyle cause such a transformation?

‘Young master Qin is in a daze! Ah, newlyweds, their love burned like fire!’ the stylist teased.

Qin Song pretended to bend his head and cough. But, Han Ting Ting was his legitimate wife, if he wanted to perve on her, who could stop him... his heart felt a foreign sense of happiness.

Qin Song’s assistant rushed to Qin Song and gave Qin Song a jewellery box with silver edges. Inside the jewellery box was a butterfly shaped necklace, the spread wings were intricate and vivid like a butterfly in flight.

‘I got it for you,’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting was stunned. It was the first time she received something so exquisite and she felt breathless.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting’s naively staring at the necklace in her hand, and felt like he’d accomplished a huge achievement. He picked up the necklace and put it on around ‘little country bun’s’ neck. When he was adjusting a wing, his fingers brushed passed Ting Ting’s collar bone and they tingled. Behind her back, Qin Song’s eyes were gentle that even he wasn’t aware of.

Qin Song sat beside Ting Ting. He saw ‘little country bun’s’ innocent trance and couldn’t resist grinning. ‘Do you like it?’

Han Ting Ting nodded and lifted her head. ‘Is it expensive?’

‘You’re really a country bumpkin!’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song felt the ‘little country bun’ was indeed a bore and the gentle atmosphere vanished. He glared at her out of resentment. What was wrong with that ‘little country bun’? Didn’t she know how to express gratitude with gestures? Would it kill her to lean into him, give him a kiss and thank him?

Han Ting Ting wasn’t affected by Qin Song’s glare. She continued to bend her head and went back to a dreamy state staring at the butterfly wings. Qin Song was in a grumpy mood for a while but she didn’t take any notice so he turned away and cursed in his heart. That butterfly and that butterfly’s owner, how hateful!

When Qin Song held Han Ting Ting and entered the venue, a wave of people turned to admire the captivating newlyweds. Everyone knew that Qin Song was young and handsome. But no one knew that Qin Song's wife was a youthful beauty that deeply moved hearts.

Han Ting Ting was praised by different groups of people continuously. It was like she was brainwashed into thinking she was an otherworldly beauty that mere mortals couldn't match up to her beauty.

Then when Chen Yun appeared, Han Ting Ting felt free from their brainwashing.

Tonight Chen Yun wore a tight fitting champagne dress that bared long slim legs. Chen Yun's movements were regal as Ting Ting's butterfly necklace, it left Ting Ting paralysed.

Ting Ting pressed her hand against her butterfly necklace, she couldn't swallow or digest anything. She felt like she was a sinner who stole someone else's lover.

Qin Song smiled and stepped toward Chen Yun. Ting Ting was again treated to the picturesque vision of the two lovebirds. Ting Ting silently stood back to distance herself from them.

Qin Song noticed Ting Ting backing away and immediately pulled her toward him.

'Ting Ting, you've met Chen Yun. She's Liang's PR manager. With her tonight is her husband and daughter,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song was smiling too brightly that Ting Ting pitied him and thought his heart must be bleeding!

Ting Ting had an epiphany. She understood why Qin Song's parents didn't approve of the beauty in front of her and why Qin Song agreed to marry her. Qin Song loved a woman with a husband!

'Ting Ting?' Qin Song called gently.

Ting Ting became alert and hurriedly chatted with Chen Yun's family.

Qin Song watched from the sideline. He thought that Ting Ting finally realised she misunderstood him! 'Little country bun's' guilty look and attentiveness

toward Chen Yun's family, put Qin Song in a relaxed mood.

Tonight Qin Song was the main attraction. It was expected that all the guests wanted to have a toast with him. Qin Song couldn't avoid drinking wine and Ting Ting who was always beside Qin Song was also asked to toast with them.

'She doesn't know how to drink. I'll drink on her behalf,' Qin Song said whenever someone wanted to toast Ting Ting.

Ting Ting thought that Qin Song must have wanted to use alcohol to escape reality and forget about another man's wife. She looked at Qin Song with pity and concern.

Qin Song after circling around the room to accept congratulations, he felt light headed and that the room spun. He embraced Ting Ting in his arms and stared down at her.

Qin Song felt that Ting Ting was looking endearingly at him. His heart felt itchy like a bird was pecking at it.

Qin Song wondered if he could kiss Ting Ting... wanted one kiss from her...

'Qin Song! Do you feel uncomfortable?' Ting Ting asked. 'Do you want to throw up?'

Qin Song was taken back... she was indeed a 'little country bun,' she couldn't read his mood at all!

'Hey, I'll take you to the bathroom,' Ting Ting said.

Ting Ting pitied Qin Song's unrequited love, he couldn't receive love back so he wanted to be drunk.

Under Ting Ting's excessive care, Qin Song was forced to throw up in the toilet. Then Qin Song laid down on a bench whilst Ting Ting turned his face left and right to wipe off the stains on his face with a wet towel.

Ting Ting was well prepared and took out a bottle of mouthwash. She gave Qin Song the mouthwash and in his dizzy state he thought it was water and gulped half the bottle. He choked and grabbed onto his throat.

'Han Ting Ting...' Qin Song said. 'Do you want to murder your husband?'

Ting Ting used one hand to pat Qin Song's back and tilted half her body toward him to rub his chest with the other hand. He couldn't underestimate the soothing comfort and the burning sensation in his throat was compressed down.

Qin Song rolled over and forced Ting Ting down easily.

Ting Ting was startled, her widened round eyes looked bright, her cherry lips glistened and Qin Song pressed their bodies closer.

'I'm... I'm... I'm sorry...' Ting Ting stuttered.

Their unexpected intimate position made Ting Ting nervous.

When their foreheads touched, Qin Song's hot breath was blown onto Ting Ting's face. Then her cheeks blushed red, her body was white, soft and looked ravishing.

Qin Song let out a laugh. 'It doesn't matter...' Qin Song said. 'Let's even the score!'

Qin Song bent his head down and accurately bit her lips and quickly swallowed her lips.

Too hot... everything suddenly darkened, Qin Song was like a fire burning through grasslands, Ting Ting struggled within the flames endlessly and couldn't escape.

Breathing became difficult, Ting Ting clearly heard gasps of the two bodies pressed together, one belonged to Qin Song and the other one was a strange sound that came from her.

Qin Song's lips stirred between Ting Ting's lips and tongue, he always wanted to swallow her. What was more frightening was his embrace. Obviously everyone had two arms, two legs and a head. But he was like a dragon wrapped around her, controlling her completely, no matter if she turned left or right, she was caged in his embrace.

Ting Ting leaned back more and more. Qin Song increasingly felt he wouldn't be satisfied enough. He only tasted 'little country bun' for a bit and he felt her body was water soft, as if he used a little more force and she'd melt. He viciously kissed her until her lips were red and swollen, one hand gripped her waist, one

hand held her neck and pulled her body into his chest. He wanted to dissolve her body into his body.

The mint flavour of the mouthwash mingled with the lingering kiss, it started off spicy, later changed into a light sweetness, a sweetness that was distinct and unforgettable. Many years later, Qin Song still only used that brand of mouthwash.

Rong Yan swore on his attractive looks that he only wanted to go to the bathroom! Rong Yan opened the door slightly, not in his wildest dreams did he expect to see one dark body and one white body wrapped around each other and each body passionately feasting on the other body... Rong Yan closed the door made from mahogany wood, but in his state of shock he forgot to move his body backward and the door collided into his forehead.

The loud bang shocked the two people who had their bodies intertwined together. Qin Song glanced at the door and saw someone. His anger from being interrupted was more poignant than his other feelings of awkwardness and embarrassment.

Beneath Qin Song, 'little country bun' was soft, eyes misty, makeup askew and lips swollen. He pulled her closer to him and protected her from being seen by that someone at the door.

Ye Mu was standing near the bathroom waiting for Rong Yan and ran to him after she heard a bang.

'What happened?' Ye Mu asked.

Rong Yan who was given a fierce dagger aimed at his sore forehead from Qin Song, turned around and faced his 'little beast'. 'Ye Mu, I want you to give me the same birthday gift that Qin Song received today.'

Ye Mu saw the bathroom scene through the gap of the door, her face turned red and she quickly pulled her shameless husband to retreat from an angry Qin Song.

In the bathroom was a tranquil silence. Qin Song's chin was pressed on top of Ting Ting's head and she couldn't see his expression.

Qin Song didn't say anything but Ting Ting felt his heart pound. Her mouth tasted of his scent combined with the mint mouthwash and that woke up her senses. Her heart felt bitter sweet because her first kiss was taken.

End of Chapter Four, except summary of the other Liang sworn brothers' similar embarrassing experiences.

The summary will be translated at the beginning of Fated Marriage – Chapter Five.

Related

part 1

Chapter Four Continued

Liang's big boss, Liang Fei Fang during a celebration banquet in honour of the newly appointed vice president, kidnapped Gu Yan for a private meeting of lips. But big boss was caught red handed kissing Gu Yan on the balcony.

Rong Yan in pursuit of Ye Mu was forced to film a clip about a handsome man picking nose, and the clip was uploaded to a famous gossip site. Then everyone in their district was entertained by the comedy clip.

Black belly Chen Yu Bai at a prestigious banquet, in front of a crowd of highly influential big wigs, professed his love for his beloved dummy, An Xiao Li.

The cross dressing Ji Nan's devoted unrequited love for Rong Yan was the worst best-kept secret.

Li Wei Ran was at the disposal of Qin Sang's deadly tongue and there were too many embarrassing scenes to recount.

The status of Qin Song's bathroom scandal was quickly circulated and was considered on par with his other five sworn brothers on the high end of the humiliation scale.

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting returned to the festivities and everyone gave them meaningful sly smiles. Qin Song had recovered and looked composed. Whereas the 'little country bun' beside him was still blushing profusely almost at boiling point. On the inside Qin Song was full of regret he only got to sample a taste of Han Ting Ting and was robbed of the main course.

Qin Song felt a bout of discomfort and coughed twice. He turned to Han Ting Ting to whisper his concern. 'Are you ok?'

Han Ting Ting felt she wasn't ok. She kept her head down, Qin Song's jacket was draped on her shoulders but highlighted her slender neck. After a while she built the courage to lift her head, looked at Qin Song and her body temperature boiled.

‘Let’s go home!’ Qin Song said and adjusted his jacket to cover more of Han Ting Ting’s bare skin.

‘Can we really go home?’ Han Ting Ting whispered.

It wasn’t the appropriate time for them to leave but Qin Song saw Han Ting Ting’s delectable embarrassed state and didn’t want to share it with critters. He didn’t care if they were male, female, young, old, married or unattached critters. In that moment he felt Han Ting Ting’s rawness was reserved for his private viewing.

‘Don’t worry, let’s go!’ Qin Song said.

It wasn’t convenient for Qin Song to explain, he simply pulled her closer to him and navigated them pass the waves of eyes that misunderstood their private moment in the bathroom.

End of Chapter Four

Chapter Five (Part 1)

After Qin Song’s birthday celebration the shared kiss between Qin Song and Han Ting Ting was a taboo topic.

That night Qin Song was hot and bothered that he was wide awake the whole night. The following day at the break of dawn he got up out of bed and went downstairs. He wasn’t surprised to see that ‘little country bun’ woke up before him.

Qin Song idled in the living room whilst waiting for breakfast.

By the time breakfast was laid out on the dining table, Han Ting Ting was in the middle of setting the bowls and utensils when she noticed Qin Song was staring at her strangely.

‘Qin Song, what’s wrong?’ Han Ting Ting asked.

Qin Song’s heart was pounding at an unusual rate but he hid it well. ‘What do you mean?’

‘Why aren’t you wearing your slippers?’ Han Ting Ting asked suspiciously.
‘Aren’t you cold?’

Qin Song looked down at his feet and was startled. He couldn’t believe he’d walked around the whole morning with bare feet.

‘I don’t feel cold at all!’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting looked away from the living room and Qin Song’s toes immediately curled. It was a cold autumn’s day but wasn’t as cold as his heart. He quietly laid down on the sofa and draped a hand on his forehead. He felt utterly wronged. The one who made him tossed and turned all night, unlike him had warm feet. He’d kissed her and she acted like nothing happened, how hateful!

Han Ting Ting skipped to her bedroom and came out again. Qin Song was still resting on the sofa waiting to be called to eat breakfast.

‘Qin Song,’ Han Ting Ting called.

Qin Song rolled over into the sofa, he didn’t want to see ‘little country bun.’

‘Qin Song!’ Han Ting Ting called and knelt in front of the sofa. ‘Hey, this is for you, your birthday gift!’

Qin Song opened his eyes in anticipation, finally she was going to give it to him.

‘I wanted to give you it to you last night but you were drunk,’ Han Ting Ting said and passed him a box. ‘Happy birthday! I hope every year you’ll be at ease like today.’

Qin Song sat up straight on the soft and wore an indifferent expression to pretend he didn’t care about it. He accepted the box and was giddy on the inside. He opened the box... it was a watch? He felt confused. ‘Why... did you get me this?’

Han Ting Ting felt disappointed, she’d wasted two months’ pay to buy it for him.

‘Han Ting Ting! The pair of gloves you knitted, who did you knit it for?’ Qin Song asked.

‘Gloves? I haven’t been knitting gloves...’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song couldn't believe her nerves, she dared to deny. His temper flared. She stayed up late many nights in a row knitting, he'd sneaked downstairs at night and seen her.

'Oh... do you mean the blue wool?' Han Ting Ting asked after having a light bulb moment. 'That wasn't gloves. They were mini clothes I made for Putt Putt.'

Putt Putt... Qin Song suffered a severe trauma. He was less important than a raggy bear.

'You wanted gloves?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Qin Song glared at 'little country bun.'

Han Ting Ting knitted her eyebrows in distress. 'But I don't know how to knit... How about I'll go buy you a pair tomorrow? What colour do you like?'

'No need!' Qin Song said.

Qin Song was in a rage that the hair on his head stood up. He stood, took two steps then turned back to retrieve the box and watch on Han Ting Ting's hand. He gave her another glare before he walked off.

From the morning after Qin Song's birthday, his name became 'Not Happy.' No matter what Han Ting Ting did, he wasn't happy. His handsome face became a frozen grouch. She tried buttering up in different ways but his face stayed in a frozen grouch state.

Ting's mum recognised something was wrong between Han Ting Ting and Qin Song. When Ting's mum was frying vegetables, Han Ting Ting was dragged into the kitchen for a grilling.

'Ting Ting, are you and Song Song fighting?' Ting's mum asked.

'No we're not,' Han Ting Ting said innocently and checked if the water in the pot was boiled. 'Now and then he's overworked and doesn't want to talk... nothing's wrong mum.'

Han Ting Ting speculated that Qin Song must still be upset about seeing Chen Yun's picture perfect family on his birthday. She didn't blame him for being angry. The woman that he loved was sleeping in another man's bed, bearing a

child for another man and the child was a cutie pie too...

‘Ting Bao! Water! Water! Stop pouring water!’ Ting’s mum shouted.

‘Not Happy’ heard the commotion, ran to the kitchen door and poked his head into the kitchen. ‘What happened?’

‘Nothing to worry about... Ting Ting, grab me the flour above the cupboard. I can savage the soggy noodles if I add flour to it,’ Ting’s mum said.

Han Ting Ting was preoccupied feeling sorry for Qin Song’s broken heart over his beloved beauty that she poured too much water into the pot and made the noodles turned soggy. She panicked and tiptoed to grab the flour above the cupboard.

Han Ting Ting stretched both her arms to grab the flour. Her shirt rode up and bared her waist that was usually supposed to be soft and white. But Ting’s mum was shocked to see black and blue fingerprints that perfectly matched the shape of Qin Song’s fingers.

Qin Song also saw his fingerprints on Han Ting Ting’s waist, he stepped into the kitchen and pulled her outstretched arms down. ‘Ahem... let me get it.’

Han Ting Ting was surprised when Qin Song’s chest was pressed up against her back that she pushed him away from her.

‘No need. Go back outside and watch tv,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song’s face tensed. He used one hand to grab the flour and one hand to pull down Han Ting Ting’s shirt and in his heart he sighed in distress.

Suddenly Han Ting Ting’s phone rang and Qin Song grimaced when he saw the caller’s area code number displayed on the screen. She hurriedly ran out to take the call and left behind Qin Song to deal with his mum-in-law’s unspoken concerned face.

‘Ah, Song Song...’ Ting’s mum said. ‘Ting Ting’s skin is sensitive since she was little. A little pressure on her skin will leave a bruise mark. You... ah... when the two of you... ah... need to be a bit more gentle!’

The deep meaning behind Ting’s mum’s words of caution made Qin Song’s ears flushed red and steam was ready to rise from his ears. He quickly nodded his

head. 'Mum... I know.'

'Hello,' Han Ting Ting said.

The autumn night wind blew cold air through Han Ting Ting's bleak heart.

'Ting Bao?' that person said in a familiar low voice.

Han Ting Ting's bleak heart suddenly turned warm.

'Um,' Han Ting Ting murmured in a daze.

'Little brat! I went to the US for a trip and flew home to find you silently moved houses. You even got yourself a husband!' that person said.

A sincere laugh was heard. 'Why didn't you say a word to me? I should have been present on your wedding day!'

Han Ting Ting's throat felt choked. Her voice was soft and rambled an incoherent explanation that she didn't know what she said to him and grilled him to deflect the attention off her.

'You... how did you know my phone number?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'That's not a hard task to do,' that person said to counteract Han Ting Ting's diversion tactic. 'How have you been? How's married life treating you?'

That person was probably smoking. Whenever he talked on the phone with someone else he had a habit of smoking a cigarette, said a few words and would blow out a ring of smoke and his face would relax... Han Ting Ting's thoughts about him smoking and talking happily... suddenly it felt like a needle pricked her heart.

That person's habits, likes and dislikes were well known to her and she realised she hadn't forgotten them.

Those memories and feelings Han Ting Ting thought she purged out, stayed familiar with her and didn't drift far from her heart. They hid deep at the bottom of her heart and waiting for one call from that person to ruin her efforts to suppress their existence. Like a harmonised army they joined forces to escape, breaking apart her heart. It didn't matter if she hid in the clouds or sunk to the

bottom of the ocean, she couldn't win against them.

'Ting Bao?' that person asked after Han Ting Ting was silent for a while.
'What's wrong?'

'Nothing's wrong...' Han Ting Ting said. 'Is Dong Dong well?'

'She's good. Hey, why aren't you bothering to ask if I'm well? I've been on a business trip for almost a year and you haven't called once to check up on me and offer words of encouragement. Little brat, when you were a kid I thought you were good natured but straight after getting married, you've cut me off!' that person said.

That person's tone was like an elder that tracked Han Ting Ting's life progression from a kid to an adult and sincerely cared about her happiness.

Han Ting Ting couldn't stand it anymore and hung up on that person. Her shaky hands removed the phone battery and tucked it in her shirt pocket.

It was almost seven in the evening. The street lights shone down on the neighbouring houses. Han Ting Ting stood on the balcony by her lonesome self against the autumn night chilly breezes. In her heart she felt the last shred of hope left finally evaporated. That person said on her wedding day he should have been present. When she decided to marry Qin Song, she did want to call that person and let him know but her fingers didn't cooperate. For hours her fingers had held onto her phone and hovered over the call button but never pressed the call button.

That person didn't know anything! He wouldn't have rushed from miles away to stop her from marrying Qin Song. He would have had the same attitude as before, comfortably laugh with her and ask if marriage was good and if she was happy being someone's wife.

How could it be good? She wasn't that person's wife, how could she be happy?

Why did she have to make it hard on herself? She knew from the beginning that she would feel the same way after she got married.

The sky darkened and the wind became colder. Han Ting Ting covered her face. She needed to give herself more time to forget. No matter how heartbroken she felt, what was most important were her parents who were inside their house.

Her parents gave her flesh and blood, a soul, love and everything that was good in her life. She couldn't chase after a burdensome love and throw away her parents.

She dried her eyes and returned into the house.

Qin Song wasn't in the kitchen. Ting's mum was kneading dough into a ball. Han Ting Ting approached her mum to help. 'Mum, where's Qin Song?'

Ting's mum stopped kneading for a bit then kneaded another two balls. Ting's mum hesitated again and decided to put them aside. Ting's mum pulled Han Ting Ting closer. 'Ting Bao... on your waist... did Song Song do that?'

Han Ting Ting was startled. Then she recalled the black and blue bruises on her waist. The morning after Qin Song's birthday banquet she'd discovered the bruises and thought it happened in the bathroom... Qin Song's fingers kneaded her body... the flashback of what caused her bruises turned her face bright red.

Ting's mum saw Han Ting Ting's embarrassed and guilty look and it made Ting's mum both overjoyed and worried. 'You and Song Song are newlyweds, being impatient a bit... is perfectly normal. But later don't be like that anymore. Know your limits... do you get what I'm saying?'

'I...' Han Ting Ting said, bit her lips and nodded.

On the way home, Qin Song and Han Ting Ting were both quiet.

Han Ting Ting's heart had a lot of grievances and didn't want to bother with Qin Song's side glances secretly assessing her.

At home, Ting Ting quietly went straight to her room.

Qin Song couldn't hold back anymore and called her back. 'Ahem... your waist... does it still hurt?'

Han Ting Ting rubbed her waist gently. 'It doesn't matter, almost healed.'

'Han Ting Ting, I...' Qin Song said and took a deep breath.

Qin Song summoned all his courage. 'That night I kissed you.'

Han Ting Ting was tensed and an instant later nodded her head. 'Um.'

Um? Qin Song's deep intake of breath was let out. That kind of response, what was that supposed to mean?

'It doesn't matter. I know, I'm not bothered about it,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting was exhausted and wanted to go to bed to talk with Putt Putt.

Qin Song smirked. 'What do you know? What new circumstances did you find out?'

'That night you were drunk and you didn't see clearly who I was, right?' Han Ting Ting said. 'Qin Song, I think you should have a careful rethink. Chen Yun's daughter is sweet and lovely. If you still want to be a homewrecker, it'll traumatise Chen Yun's daughter.'

He-knew-it! Qin Song was crazy enough to flip the table. He knew Han Ting Ting would think about that kind of misguided nonsense.

'Han-Ting-Ting!' Qin Song said. 'There's something wrong with your brain!'

Han Ting Ting's heart felt uncomfortable. 'I care about you as a friend but you're ungrateful. In the future I won't meddle with what happens between you and Chen Yun. Have a goodnight!'

Qin Song saw Han Ting Ting turned around to leave and exploded.

'Who gave you permission to go to sleep?' Qin Song asked loudly.

Han Ting Ting lost her temper too and sternly faced Qin Song. 'I don't need your permission! I'm tired. If I want to sleep then I'll sleep!'

Han Ting Ting turned around and walked to her room. Qin Song took long strides and caught up to her and pulled her back. He was going to say something when she coldly shoved his arm away. The sudden movement caused him to stumble back two steps and fall to the floor.

Qin Song was shocked and froze on the spot. He stared at Han Ting Ting... it was the first time one push from a girl made him fall.

'Don't bother me anymore!' Han Ting Ting yelled.

Han Ting Ting saw Qin Song lifted himself off the ground. But her loud yell,

scared away his soul and he fell down again.

Han Ting Ting's face flushed red with anger and she glared at him for another ten seconds then her legs felt a little steely and she turned around to walk back to her room.

Qin Song sat on the floor on his own. His heart thought the world must have spun the opposite direction. Did he teleported to another dimension? The girl who glared at him and yelled loudly... was it really his 'little country bun?'

The dim lights that twinkled in a spacious living room, highlighted the lonesome sofa. Qin Song pitifully crawled to the sofa and boosted himself up. He stood and stared at Han Ting Ting's bedroom door that was closed shut a long while ago. Then he quietly used the rail to guide him upstairs.

End of Chapter Five (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Five (Part 2 of 2)

The whole night, Han Ting Ting had bizarre dreams. She dreamt she was back in her old house. Dong Dong was little, everyday Dong Dong was sent to a nursery and she'd pick Dong Dong up after work. She'd run out of the nursery and that person was leaning against a black SUV, smoking and waiting for them. His expression was carefree and had a handsome cold aura. When he saw her running toward his car, he'd smile and spoke gently to her. 'You're all grown up now and still running and jumping about.'

Han Ting Ting's dream morphed to her childhood. That person wore a white shirt. It was her birthday. He crouched down in front of her and gave her a cute teddy bear! He rubbed her head and smile. 'Today's little Ting Ting's birthday, happy birthday!'

Han Ting Ting was raised under a strict military style. Her birthday gift every year was an egg bread. That birthday it was the first time someone happily said happy birthday to her. It was also the first time she knew that such a warm person existed in the world.

Back then Putt Putt was brand new and had a fresh smell. When she was little that person was exclusively good natured toward her.

It was a precious and memorable period of her life.

When she woke up her pillow was wet and she hugged Putt Putt. She rubbed her eyes for a long time before lazily getting out of bed and washing her face.

Han Ting Ting stepped out of her room and saw Qin Song coming downstairs. His suit was impeccable, a jacket draped on his arm, he carried a briefcase and documents in his hands. He looked like he was ready to go to work.

'Ah, why are you up so early today? I haven't made breakfast for you...' Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song lifted his head and walked quickly passed Han Ting Ting. His back was straight as he walked to the door to change his shoes. He acted like she didn't

exist.

A silent cold war between Qin Song and Han Ting Ting started from that morning.

Properties listed under Qin Song's name were too many to count in one go, he didn't need to worry he didn't have anywhere to go. Before he got married, he'd decided to renovate one of his properties and furnish it lavishly. He thought he was going to go through the pretence of getting married then moved out on his own. He finally got a good opportunity to move out and make use of the renovated house.

Han Ting Ting at the start of the cold silent war had forgotten what happened between her and Qin Song. But after she saw him left their home in a puff, he didn't come back for two nights. She stayed at home worried and thought about what she did wrong and finally she remembered the night she pushed him and he fell onto the floor.

After she remembered, she didn't care about saving money and immediately called a taxi to drive her straight to Liang's company building.

It was rare for all six Liang's sworn brothers to meet up on a weekend. They were discussing one of Qin's company finance investment proposals. Qin Song kept spacing out and disrupted the meeting. Rong Yan lost his patience and pounded the meeting table.

'Qin Song!' Rong Yan called.

Qin Song used his pen to prop his chin and Rong Yan's outburst woke him up from his deep thoughts. 'What?'

Rong Yan narrowed his eyes and aimed a dagger at Qin Song.

Ji Nan pulled Qin Song's ear and teasingly scolded Qin Song. 'Qin Song, we asked how things are progressing at your end. But why are you in a daze?'

Qin Song rubbed his face and awkwardly coughed.

Li Wei Ran saw Qin Song's lost look and helped Qin Song out. Li Wei Ran turned

off the projector. 'I'm tired too. Let's all take a break and order for food as well.'

Everyone stretched their bodies, drank water and gossiped. Qin Song quietly left the meeting room by himself and went to wash his face.

The moment Qin Song left, Ji Nan pulled Li Wei Ran aside to grill him. 'What's wrong with Song Song?'

Li Wei Ran shrugged his shoulders. 'How should I know?'

Their conversation was interrupted by an assistant who rushed into the meeting room.

'Mrs Qin junior is here. She also brought a lot of home cooked food.'

Li Wei Ran coughed, put his phone down and went to escort Han Ting Ting into the meeting room. Ji Nan rushed around the room looking for drink assortments. Chen Yu Bai silently tidied the paperwork on the meeting table to make room for food. Rong Yan tucked a handkerchief into the front of his shirt collar to use as a makeshift napkin and happily waited for food to arrive. Big boss leisurely loosened his tie and rolled up his shirt sleeves.

Apart from Li Wei Ran, Han Ting Ting wasn't familiar with Qin Song's other sworn brothers. Her initial impression of them was that they were immaculate otherworldly geniuses. Unexpectedly the high class sworn brothers at the meeting table were fighting with each other over food. It left Han Ting Ting standing frozen in a speechless daze.

Li Wei Ran was the most chivalrous. He ignored the ghastly beasts killing each other and remembered to be courteous toward Han Ting Ting and asked her to take a seat.

'Li Wei Ran, where's Qin... Song Song?' Han Ting Ting asked softly.

Li Wei Ran pointed to the direction of the bathroom built inside the meeting room. 'What's wrong with Song Song the last two days? He hasn't been himself and seemed a bit lost.'

'He's... mad at me.' Han Ting Ting said awkwardly and fiddled her hair. 'I'm not good, I pushed him and caused him to fall. That's why he's not happy.'

Han Ting Ting was busy explaining when she turned her head the four sworn

brothers that were using brute force to scavenge for food suddenly surrounded her back. She was startled and looked at Li Wei Ran blankly.

Li Wei Ran maintained a serene smile. 'You... pushed Song Song to fall?'

Han Ting Ting didn't notice anything strange and nodded her head. 'The last two nights he didn't come home. I called his phone but he didn't pick up... I came here to say sorry to him.'

Ji Nan was the first to burst out laughing. Suddenly the bathroom door opened and Qin Song stepped out. Li Wei Ran withdrew his strange speculations and acted like he didn't hear or see anything.

Qin Song saw Han Ting Ting stood in the meeting room and his expression changed to that of a stern master of the house and silently gave a look of indifference.

Han Ting Ting felt embarrassed and fiddled here and there. 'Song Song...'

Qin Song saw Han Ting Ting's embarrassed state and his heart softened. He reluctantly stepped toward her. 'What are you doing here?'

Qin Song saw Han Ting Ting's face turned red, she looked like a white and pink bun... but he also noticed five amused critters in the meeting room watching their conversation play out from the sidelines. Then he pulled her out of the meeting room. 'Wait outside while I finish the meeting!'

Han Ting Ting obediently agreed and carefully closed the meeting room door on her way out.

The meeting resumed and the productiveness of the meeting shot up. The Liang's sworn brothers saw Qin Song was pumped up to finish the meeting, and they secretly exchanged knowing glances at each other.

'I'm done!' Qin Song said and grinned. 'Let's stop the meeting here.'

Everyone else was silent. Then Ji Nan propped her chin up with her hand and looked at Qin Song. 'I'm hungry!'

Qin Song hurriedly tidied the paperwork on the meeting table and didn't bother to lift his head. 'You ate like a pig and can still say you're hungry... None

of you have a conscience, no one left a portion of the food for me!’

Rong Yan smiled slyly. ‘The young Qin master is not happy.’

‘Oh, why is the young Qin master not happy?’ Chen Yu Bai asked with a rare smile.

Li Wei Ran innocently put his hands up in the air. ‘It has nothing to do with me. I wasn’t the one who pushed him to fall!’

Qin Song was completely framed.

‘Meeting adjourned! Stop the nonsense,’ Big boss said. Big boss knocked on the table, stood up and gently added fuel to the fire. ‘Or our young Qin master will run away from home.’

Li Wei Ran couldn’t take it anymore, lost his composure and burst out laughing.

Qin Song’s eyes had a misty layer of shame. He hugged his suitcase and ran outside to escape the taunting.

Han Ting Ting’s waiting stance was that of someone who felt remorseful. Her two legs were closed together and tilted on an angle, two hands were clasped on her knees and her head bent. She sat on the sofa, didn’t move an inch and waited patiently.

Qin Song rarely waited for anyone but there have been many women who had frivolously waited for him. Those women played with their phones, read a magazine or entertained themselves with something else... when he stepped out of the meeting room it was the first time a girl radiantly sat in silence and waited for him.

Qin Song thought having someone seriously waiting for him was a beautiful sight!

For that reason when he stepped toward Han Ting Ting, he was powerless to put up a cold attitude toward her.

Han Ting Ting saw Qin Song and happily stood up. ‘Is your meeting finish? Are you tired?’

‘I’m ok,’ Qin Song said. ‘Is there something you wanted?’

Han Ting Ting fiddled with her hands for a while and struggled to open her mouth.

‘I’m sorry. This time it’s my fault. I’m sorry...’ Han Ting Ting said seriously. ‘I hope you’ll forgive me.’

Qin Song was taken back from her sudden apology and took a step back. It was the first time he’d seen someone sincerely apologised to him.

Qin Song didn’t know what to say.

‘Ahem... forget it. I’m not going to make a fuss about it with you,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song felt it was strange he forgave Han Ting Ting easily. Didn’t he take a silent oath that he’d ignore her existence?

‘Thank you!’ Han Ting Ting said on the verge of tears.

Qin Song still had a bit of reservation but he saw Han Ting Ting’s pitiful choked distress and melted. If he said he’d let it go then he should. After all, he was a generous and a mature man so there was no need to get even with her.

‘Han Ting Ting, on the outside you appear like a normal girl. But that night, what voodoo possessed you? Do you have a mental illness you’re hiding from me?’ Qin Song scolded.

‘I don’t...’ Han Ting Ting said. ‘That... that night I received a call from that person. He’s back... it made me feel uncomfortable. Then you were venting on me and kept bothering me... that’s when I lost it and pushed you. In the future I won’t be like that anymore. I promise!’

‘Who called you? Who’s back?’ Qin Song asked and grimaced. ‘Was it that person who wants you to be his daughter’s step-mum, right?’

‘He doesn’t want me to be Dong Dong’s step-mum! Don’t talk nonsense!’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song crossed his arms and laughed coldly at her. That warm mood he was

in a moment ago suddenly vaporised.

Qin Song felt he should have seen it from the start. Han Ting Ting was that kind of person. What gently waiting? What sincere apology? It was just part of her nature. She didn't specifically wait or said sorry to him because he was someone special to her. Instead one call from that widower changed her from her usual easy going approach into a different person.

Qin Song knew that love was special. A few years ago, someone he knew said to him something he'd couldn't forget. She said she wouldn't kill herself over someone, she vowed to continue living because of one person, no matter what obstacles life threw at her. The Qin Song those years ago was a thousand times more arrogant and childish. But that Qin Song at least knew that he wasn't the reason she wanted to keep living no matter how much she struggled and that was why he let her go.

Qin Song's heart suddenly became cold and in turn his mood became cold. 'Han Ting Ting! I can't stop you from wanting to be her step-mum. But don't ever forget your current status! If you dare do anything disgraceful then you and that person will have me to deal with!'

Qin Song's crazy outburst was scary. Han Ting Ting pursed her lips too scared to reply.

'Did you hear me?' Qin Song asked harshly.

'I didn't do anything disgraceful...' Han Ting Ting muttered.

After a while Han Ting Ting dared to reply. 'I heard you.'

Han Ting Ting's pitiful state caused Qin Song to not know where to tuck his angry outburst. He gritted his teeth for a while then grabbed her hand. 'Let's go to my parent' house for dinner!'

At Qin Song's parents' dining table, Zhang Yu discovered that her son's complexion that night was poor, as if someone made him angry.

'Ting Ting!' Zhang Yu whispered into her daughter-in-law's ear. 'What's wrong with Song Song? It's hard to look straight at him.'

Han Ting Ting shook her head and hid her guilty conscience. 'I don't know.'

‘Zhang Yu!’ Qin Yun scolded gently and put food into his wife’s bowl. ‘Eat properly.’

Zhang Yu sat properly in her chair, buried her head and ate two spoons of rice but wasn’t satisfied. She looked back and forth from her son and daughter-in-law. Finally she decided to attack Qin Song.

‘Song Song, what’s wrong? You haven’t said a word all night. Isn’t the food appetizing? I can ask the chef to make more dishes that you like,’ Zhang Yu coaxed.

‘You don’t have to,’ Qin Song said and fell silent.

Qin Yun saw his wife’s happy face suddenly turned disappointed and felt disgruntled toward his son. ‘If you don’t like the food then don’t force yourself! Putting on such a long face, who are you doing it for to see?’

Qin Song’s burning anger intensified and he slammed his chopsticks on the table. ‘Dad, have you said enough? Dad, do you think I enjoy coming here to eat dinner?’

‘You insolent child!’ Qin Yun cursed and slammed his chopsticks too. ‘Get out of my house!’

Qin Song laughed coldly. ‘Going round in circles, you still can only repeat the same broken tune.’

‘You!’ Qin Yun shouted.

Qin Yun’s anger boiled over. He pounded the table and caused Han Ting Ting and Zhang Yu to be scared witless.

Zhang Yu rushed to hold back her husband and scolded Qin Song. ‘Song Song, what are you doing? Can’t you be civil toward your father? Every time you’re in the same room as your father, you always pick a fight!’

Qin Song laughed viciously. ‘Where can I find a dad? That man disowned me a long time ago!’

‘Song Song!’ Han Ting Ting called gently.

Han Ting Ting stood beside Qin Song and tugged his shirt sleeve. ‘Don’t say anything else.’

Qin Yun being held back by his wife made him wanted to explode. He pointed a condemning finger at Qin Song. 'You caused such a mess to disgrace the Qin family. It couldn't be you're still hopeful I'll take the blame for you and wipe your slate clean?'

Qin Song's complexion darkened and charged toward his dad.

Han Ting Ting hugged Qin Song's waist from behind and used all her strength to pull him back.

'Ting Ting, let him go. I want to see what he'll do!' Qin Yun said.

Zhang Yu braced her husband's waist from the front. 'What are you doing? Is it fun fighting with your son?'

'I don't have that kind of son who's not even on par with a pig or dog!' Qin Yun shouted.

Qin Yun exploded and the veins on his forehead were clearly visible.

'Ah...' Zhang Yu mumbled and rubbed her ear. 'My ear is almost deaf from your shouting!'

Qin Song was held tightly by Han Ting Ting and she wouldn't let go. He was scared of injuring her and didn't use force to push her away. He waited for his anger to subside. Then he calmly turned around and dragged her outside.

Han Ting Ting whilst being dragged turned her head around to face Qin Song's parents. 'I'm sorry dad. I'm sorry mum... we'll be leaving.'

'Speak for yourself!' Qin Song vented.

Qin Song didn't bother looking back and stormed off with Han Ting Ting.

Outside Qin Song's parents' house, Han Ting Ting thought his anger must have made his head dizzy because he forgot to go to the parking area to get his car. They walked pass the garden path, passed the gate and continued to walk to the main road.

Han Ting Ting's hand was held tight by Qin Song and she was forced to run little steps to keep up with him.

Han Ting Ting couldn't run anymore. She was breathing heavily. Qin Song didn't reply to her so she decided to plop herself on the ground. She looked like a suitcase being pulled along by him.

Qin Song halted. His heart wouldn't stop pounding. He looked at the dark night sky and his eyes were bleak that Han Ting Ting wasn't used to seeing from him.

'Qin Song...' Han Ting Ting said gently and pulled his pants hem. 'Let's sit here and take a rest for a bit.'

Han Ting Ting sat down and stared up at Qin Song pleadingly. He obediently sat down beside her.

'Qin Song, why did your dad scold you that you can't compare to a pig or dog?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Han Ting Ting massaged her sore legs.

Qin Song inhaled the cold air into his chest. He turned to face Han Ting Ting. 'Who would comfort another person the same way as you?'

'Well, I need to know what happened first so I can think of an appropriate way to comfort you,' Han Ting Ting said sternly. 'Why did your dad disown you? What did you do?'

Qin Song felt calmer, looked at the sky and took a deep breath. 'A few years ago, I loved a girl and caused a lot of trouble.'

'Was the girl Chen Yun?' Han Ting Ting asked fearlessly.

Qin Song choked. He held 'little country bun's' face and pinched her cheeks. He wanted to do that for a long time. Each time he said chicken and she said duck, she'd look at him innocently with that soft white face of hers and made him wanted to pinch her cheeks.

Qin Song pinched 'little country bun's' cheeks until she looked like she was about to cry then felt a sense of triumph.

'You-keep-talking!' Han Ting Ting said and rubbed her sore cheeks.

Qin Song's mood improved. On the road there weren't any passing cars. He straightened his legs on the road and laid back on the footpath and his arms stretched out. He recalled his hot-headed younger years and grinned. 'I loved her

but she loved someone else. Back then I was stubborn and arrogant. I used a lot of deceitful methods to force her to be my girlfriend.'

Han Ting Ting felt her heart was deeply moved! She laid down next to him.

'My dad was against me and her being together. After dad found out what sort of deceitful methods I used to separate her and the person she loved, dad was furious. Since little dad loved that Li Wei Ran more than he loved me...' Qin Song said.

'You...' Han Ting Ting uttered and her eyes spun. 'You stole Li Wei Ran's girlfriend? The girl was Qin Sang?'

Han Ting Ting sat up straight. Qin Song got her to lie back down then glared at 'little country bun.'

'It was Li Wei Ran who stole Qin Sang from me! I was intimate with Qin Sang first!'

Han Ting Ting gasped and her mouth was wide open for a long time.

'Out of our relatives from the younger generation, me and Li Wei Ran were the closest in age to each other. When we were kids we fought. When we grew up we sowed a lot of oats. We were inseparable, each other's shadow. When we used to play around, I used to steal the girls he was intimate with too,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song realised it was the first time he confided to someone else about his shameful past involving Li Wei Ran in a calmly manner. It wasn't as hard to voice his grievances out loud than he had thought it would be. He'd bottled them for too many years and never dared to acknowledge them.

'Now thinking back, Qin Sang said a truth I couldn't refute. She said that the person I took notice of and cared about was Li Wei Ran instead of her. She said if someone else had stolen her from me, I would have let her go straight away. But the person who stole her from me was Li Wei Ran and I couldn't accept it was him and felt a sense of betrayal... You've seen it. Ever since Li Wei Ran and Qin Sang became a couple they've always joined forces to bully me,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song's arms relaxed. He felt a heavy burden fell from his heart and he felt a sense of freedom he'd never felt before.

Han Ting Ting smiled and patted Qin Song's relaxed arm. She admired him a bit. Admired that he had the courage to make mistakes and to admit his mistakes freely. Whereas, she still hadn't dared to voice her mistakes.

'I'm hungry...' Qin Song said. He looked up at the sky and stared at 'little country bun.' 'Let's go eat something!'

Han Ting Ting nodded. Then she remembered there wasn't food left at home. 'Let's eat at a restaurant, my treat!'

Qin Song glanced at Han Ting Ting with a strange look. 'Why's that? Have you fallen for me?'

Han Ting Ting laughed loudly. 'How could that happen?'

Han Ting Ting answered too quickly and too firmly, which dampened Qin Song's good mood.

'I've caused you a lot of trouble. But I'll remember our agreement about I'm not allowed to love you,' Han Ting Ting said with absolute certainty.

Qin Song felt a little uncomfortable and forced himself to smile. 'It's good you remember.'

'Let's get going!' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting and Qin Song had laid down for a long time and the night became colder. Han Ting Ting stood up and jumped about to warm up. Then she pulled him up and they walked side by side together.

'What do you want to eat?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Golden Age seafood!' Qin Song said to turn his grief to appetite.

Han Ting Ting was startled. 'Hey! How can you take advantage of me like that? Golden Age seafood is too expensive!'

Qin Song laughed. 'I'm only giving you a good opportunity to show your sincerity.'

'Don't be like that... the supermarkets haven't closed yet, let's go buy food to cook at home!' Han Ting Ting suggested. 'Do you want to eat crabs? Crabs in this season are the fattest!'

‘Um, like you,’ Qin Song said.

‘You!’ Han Ting Ting said.

The road was long, the night was deep, under the street lights, two people walked hand in hand and they lived fully in a single day.

End of Chapter Five (Part 2 of 2)

Related

part 1

Chapter Six (Part 1)

Han Ting Ting didn't expect that Qin Song who was meant to be fearless, arrogant and domineering, not afraid of heaven or earth was afraid of crabs.

When she was picking crabs at the supermarkets, she picked up a crab to see if it was fat or skinny and turned to see Qin Song had quietly stepped back away from the crab.

At home, Han Ting Ting went to look for a brush to clean the crabs, she called Qin Song to stand next to her and pass her each crab but he adamantly refused.

Han Ting Ting from a kid was downright honest and she treated her friends warmly. So teasing another person was the first time, Qin Song's embarrassed and awkward face gave her a fresh sense of happiness.

Qin Song saw 'little country bun' laughed to the point her eyes narrowed in a line, his hot blood rose and his masculine pride surfaced. He strode to open a bag of crabs, closed his eyes and picked up a crab. Its claws were bared and he passed it to Han Ting Ting.

Han Ting Ting gently took the crab, dipped it in water and scrubbed the crab skilfully. As for Qin Song after he retreated his hand, his arms and legs still trembled.

'Oh!' Qin Song said and rubbed a hand on Han Ting Ting's shirt. 'Your cooking skills are usually ordinary but your handling of the crabs is skilful.'

Han Ting Ting passed Qin Song a clean towel to wipe his hands and smiled. 'My grandpa loves to eat crabs. As a kid I'd follow him around and watch him clean and cook crabs. Then slowly I learned how to handle crabs from watching him.'

Qin Song wiped his hands. Then he used the towel to tease the crabs that were still in the water. 'When I was a kid I met your grandpa.'

Han Ting Ting widened her eyes.

'One year there was an old man who came to visit my granddad... your

grandpa was tall and had a gentle smile, right?' Qin Song said teasingly.

Han Ting Ting heard Qin Song's impression of her grandpa and laughed loudly. 'My grandpa is not gentle. When my grandpa and dad fight they could make the roof collapse. But my grandpa loves me. When I was a kid and lost all my baby teeth, I couldn't eat solid food. My grandpa used a knife to break apart crab shells. He'd peel the soft crab meat off and feed it to me to eat.'

Han Ting Ting's face shone with happiness as she was sharing her good childhood memories with Qin Song.

Han Ting Ting felt that each person during the years of carefree innocence had that one person or a few people who gave them joyful memories. She couldn't go back to the past to relive those carefree years but those joyful memories that couldn't be replicated, stayed warm and buried deep in her heart like precious treasures.

Qin Song felt that Han Ting Ting was an ordinary person who was easy to bully. He didn't realise she was also a person who had someone who looked after her meticulously, protected her until she grew up and that she was someone's precious jewel sheltered in the palm of their hand. But he'd always been finding opportunities to cause her grief. His eyes were finally opened and he realised it wasn't right for him to treat her that way.

'Ah! A a a!' Qin Song cried out.

Qin Song was in a daze staring at Han Ting Ting's beautiful innocence that he didn't notice a fat crab had crawled up the towel in his hand. The crab clamped his hand with a fat claw that Han Ting Ting loved to eat, he jumped up and down and waved his clamped hand in the air.

Han Ting Ting didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the sight of Qin Song jumping around. She quickly held his clamped hand and dipped it into water. The fat crab let go of him and crawled happily. She wanted to scold him for being careless but when she turned around he was closer to her than she thought, their faces met and her lips gently touched his cheek.

Han Ting Ting panicked and was about to fall back but Qin Song had quick reflexes. He was relieved he braced her fall. She laid on top of him and his arms were wrapped around her waist. The crabs were crawling about obliviously to

the rare night scenery of Qin Song and Han Ting Ting holding onto each other tightly.

It was the middle of the night, the world around them was tranquil and Han Ting Ting could clearly hear her heart pounding.

Living with Qin Song for a period, Han Ting Ting was still not used to his handsome face that always dazzled her, especially under the shimmering lights that made his looks appear dreamlike and more hypnotising. From the first day she met him she knew he was too handsome. But tonight he held her close enough for her to feel his hot breath on her face, she didn't know why she felt he was the most handsome man in the world... it was a naive notion but her heart kept pounding that it was the truth.

Qin Song was also hypnotised by Han Ting Ting. He was craving for the soft and sweet scented treasure held to his chest. The moist pink lips that touched his cheek imprinted an invisible scorch mark. Those lips... on the night of his birthday in the bathroom, he pretended he was drunk to 'accidentally' taste those lips... how were those lips too adorable, too soft and too sweet?

Qin Song's adam apple moved up and down. He was overwhelmed by Han Ting Ting's clear innocent eyes and felt disappointed when her moist lips left his cheek. He reluctantly lifted himself up and then gently pulled her up too.

'Ahem...' Qin Song coughed.

After Qin Song and Han Ting Ting's bodies separated, they both avoided eye contact with each other and their faces flushed red with embarrassment.

'That...' Han Ting Ting whispered and patted Qin Song's arm. 'Qin Song, your hand's bleeding. I'll apply medicine on your hand for you.'

Qin Song had long forgotten about his wounded hand until he heard Han Ting Ting mentioned it. He brushed off the fresh damp blood and waved his wounded hand in a manly manner. 'It's nothing.'

Qin Song was deprived of Han Ting Ting's concerned face but he was treated with the sight of the back of her long and white neck. He was preoccupied with her tantalizing neck that he took no notice of the stinging on his wounded hand when the disinfectant was applied.

Qin Song was confused, he didn't know what was wrong with him. Why was he increasingly more aware of 'little country bun's' existence day by day?

'All done!' Han Ting Ting said after she bandaged his hand. She looked at his bandaged hand and was satisfied with her handiwork. 'Later when you take a shower, remember to wear a plastic glove over your wounded hand. Don't let it get wet and by tomorrow it'll get better.'

Qin Song muffled a promise.

The mention of gloves prompted Han Ting Ting. 'Oh yeah, I bought the gloves you wanted.'

Qin Song was still pondering over his mysterious heart but his eyes lit up after he heard Han Ting Ting had gloves for him. He quickly hid his excitement and acted like he didn't care. 'Oh?'

Han Ting Ting on the other hand didn't hide her excitement. She spent a long time to find the perfect pair of gloves for Qin Song. He'd definitely fall in love with the gloves!

'After dinner I'll give the gloves to you,' Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song felt his wounded hand was a blessing from the heavens. During dinner, Han Ting Ting served him whole heartedly. She carefully peeled off the shells and fed the crab meat to him. It was the most delicious crab meat he tasted! And he didn't have to lift a finger, he felt like a satisfied cat that was doted on.

After dinner, Han Ting Ting rolled up her shirt sleeves and cleaned inside kitchen. Whilst cleaning she noticed that Qin Song kept dawdling in the living room instead of going upstairs to sleep. Her initial thought was that he was exercising to digest dinner then she had a light bulb moment. He must be waiting for her to give him the gloves!

Han Ting Ting immediately ran to her room then went to the living room smiling as she gave Qin Song a small box. 'Your gloves!'

Qin Song felt half-dead waiting for Han Ting Ting to give him the gloves. He was secretly excited as his hand reached into the box. After he pulled out the pair of gloves... his face turned green.

‘Han Ting Ting!’ Qin Song boomed and in a fit of anger threw the gloves onto the sofa.

‘What... what’s wrong with it?’ Han Ting Ting asked.

Han Ting Ting tensed. Why was it every time she gave Qin Song a gift, he never liked them?

Qin Song gritted his teeth. ‘Have-you-ever-seen-a-man-wear-pink-gloves?’

Han Ting Ting felt framed. ‘You said you liked pink...’

Han Ting Ting especially looked for gloves the exact same colour as her new phone. The same phone that Qin Song gave her and he said that it used to be his phone. The phone and the gloves were the identical shades of pink! ‘The coral pink is a beautiful colour and the online shop commented that it was suitable for both men and women to wear.’

Qin Song was choked, he couldn’t swallow the injustice. He was speechless, felt powerless and his heart ached. He walked angrily back and forth continuously.

‘If you don’t like it, it’s ok. Why be angry for? Not loveable at all!’ Han Ting Ting’s heart telepathically scolded Qin Song.

Han Ting Ting picked up the gloves that were more loveable than the sulky Qin Song. Suddenly he snatched the gloves and glared at her.

‘Mine!’ Qin Song said coldly to ‘little country bun.’

Unfortunately for Qin Song, Han Ting Ting had long ago lost the curiosity about his erratic hot and cold temperament and she only stared back helplessly.

The moody Qin Song bypassed ‘little country bun’ and went upstairs.

Han Ting Ting returned to her room and used her p-i-n-k phone to chat online with Tu Tu through the QQ server.

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Qin Song doesn’t like the colour pink. You exchange for me a different colour pair of gloves.’

Tu Tu Is Not Called Mao Mao: ‘Sorry, shop goods once sold, no return.’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Your shop advertised a return policy – seven days

unconditional return!’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘I’m not exchanging. What are you going to do? Come here and hit me? :p hee hee hee.’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘That’s right! >_< Mao Mao, you better exchange it for me!’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘(View flipped table CGI) Do not call me Mao Mao! Han Ting Ting you dare mock me? Next time no discount, no free shipping!’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Forget it... no need for exchange...’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘You and Qin Song... is the relationship between the two of you getting better?’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Um, yes. Qin Song’s personality is good. He’s a responsible person and he helped me a lot. Except sometimes... he’s a bit childish.’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘Don’t you mean most of the time?’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘It’s strange, you always think the worst of him. Why do you dislike him that much? Has he done something to provoke you?’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘Forget it... even if I told you, you wouldn’t understand. Is your home internet still not working?’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Um, yes. The home phone’s not working either, it’s strange!’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘Oh? I’m not surprised, it’s not strange at all!’

Unbeknownst to Han Ting Ting, Tu Tu was secretly chuckling at Han Ting Ting’s childish husband. Tu Tu had saved the message – ‘evidence your head!’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘(view lol CGI) If he dared to let you talk to me, that would be strange.’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘(view confused CGI) I’m going to bed. I have work tomorrow. Goodnight my dearest Tu Tu!’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘Goodnight... ah, wait! Ting Ting, did you know that person is back?’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Um, yes.'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'Are you ok about it?'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'I'm fine. I'm married to someone else. Nothing will happen between me and that person.'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'He came to ask me... he asked me if you're living a good life.'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'I don't want to hear anything else about him!'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Those days of hoping something would happen between me and him, it was a hard life for me. I don't want to continue living those days.'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'Ok, I know what to do now. Goodnight, have a good rest! xoxo'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Um, goodnight!'

Han Ting Ting exit out of QQ. She rolled over and hugged Putt Putt. Her calm heart suddenly overwhelmed by turbulent waves. The night was dark and bleak as her heart and it was hard for her to sleep.

A one sided love was deadly. That person didn't know anything, whilst Han Ting Ting loved deeply and was hurt deeply.

Han Ting Ting felt suffering in the dark was hopeless and could only bear fruit to a murky future. She thought for the rest of her life, she didn't have the courage left to taste love.

Well, Han Ting Ting felt at least she loved one person in her life. That person didn't know anything, but it turned out to be a luxurious blessing and she was content to be the only one who understood her unrequited love.

The quiet night was disturbed by a 'bang.' Han Ting Ting was startled and sat up on her bed. 'Qin Song!'

'It's me,' Qin Song said from outside the door.

Han Ting Ting felt unfamiliar with the unspeakable painful tone of Qin Song's voice.

Han Ting Ting jumped down her bed. She opened the door and saw Qin Song half sitting and half kneeling at the bottom of the stairs and she realised the 'bang' she heard was him falling down the stairs.

Han Ting Ting rushed over to Qin Song, his face was bleached white and there was panic in his eyes.

'What happened? Where are you hurt?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Ting Ting!' Qin Song called. His voice was weak and full of despair. 'My dad is in a coma, he'd just been taken to the hospital.'

'Song Song, stand up first,' Han Ting Ting said and supported Qin Song up.

Han Ting Ting was scared Qin Song's fall was serious because he stretched his legs in an unnatural way and his lips were pursed. She carefully touched his whole body and let out a deep breath of relief when she didn't find any broken bones.

'Take me to the hospital,' Qin Song said weakly and he held Han Ting Ting's hand.

Han Ting Ting nodded her head. 'Let's go.'

End of Chapter Six (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Six (Part 2 of 2)

Despite it was two in the morning, at the hospital there were many people from the Qin household. They all looked either anxious or frivolously waiting. Qin Song's eyes swept over them coldly, he held Han Ting Ting's hand and led her to where the largest crowd gathered.

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting found where Zhang Yu sat. Zhang Yu was surrounded by Qin household members from the top of the pyramid hierarchy. Uncles and brothers kept pressing Zhang Yu about the seriousness of Qin Yun's condition. What those vultures were most concerned about was how it'd affect the change in power and share price of Qin's company after the state of Qin Yun's health was publicised.

The carefree and gentleness of Zhang Yu's usual mood was non-existent. The Zhang Yu that sat in front of those vultures was like a dignified queen from a seventeenth century European oil painting. She sat there calmly, her back straight and ignored the vultures' questions.

Zhang Yu's noble aura made the vultures only dare to surround her from a distance and not one of them dared to use force to intimidate her to answer their questions.

Qin Song was within steps of the crowd's circle, he halted and withdrew the anguish from his face. He coughed not too light or too heavy. 'Gentlemen, what are you doing?'

The crowd heard Qin Song and immediately retreated from Zhang Yu's spot and circled Qin Song. 'Qin Song! Your father is dying!'

One by one they showed their true colours and Qin Song pursed his lips whilst they ranted.

'I think we should convene an emergency meeting. Qin's company cannot become a headless snake!'

'A public statement needs to be issued. Many reporters have already called

and asked about the nature of Qin Yun's hospitalization.'

Qin Song quietly listened but the hand that held Han Ting Ting's hand applied more pressure as he endured each of their heartless comments. 'Uncles, there's no need to worry. Everything will be dealt with in a satisfactory manner. It's getting late, everyone should go back to their own homes. Tomorrow I'll notify everyone if there's a change in circumstances.'

Qin Song's peers relied on their elderly status to bully Qin Song. 'What would a child like you understand? It's a critical moment that will affect the livelihood of Qin's company.'

'Oh? Uncle, do you have a better suggestion?' Qin Song said with obvious anger and smiled coldly. 'I respect you as my elder. But I'm married, no longer a child. Any business relating to Qin's company, it's up to me to make the final decision. Uncle's opinion will not change anything.'

Qin Song knew when to hold back. He silently swept an icy look around the circle and everyone was intimidated by his cold aura.

'Song Song!' Zhang Yu called from behind the solemn circle. 'You can't speak to your uncles in a disrespectful manner. If your father knew about it then he'll blame you for not knowing the difference between top to bottom.'

Qin Song laughed faintly and didn't say anything else.

No one in the crowd dare to offer another opinion. For many years, Qin Song and Li Wei Ran have helped to establish Liang's company to become a competitive company on the market. They were secretly happy that Qin Song had no desire to take over Qin's company. They thought Qin Yun would choose someone from amongst them to be the next head of Qin's company. But today they witnessed Qin Song's determination to protect Qin's company from their clutches and their hopes were dashed. Qin Song was Qin Yun's legitimate heir and the Zhang household was a powerful force to be reckoned with. Qin Song also had his own merits, he'd achieved fame for his work ethics and drive.

There was a temporary stalemate between the two sides.

Han Ting Ting gently pulled Qin Song's hand. 'Song Song, let's go inside to see dad.'

‘Um,’ Qin Song said and led Han Ting Ting and Zhang Yu into Qin Yun’s hospital room.

Before the senior members of the Qin household were able to hassle Zhang Yu because there were no guards. As a preventative measure Zhang Yu ordered two chauffers and a butler to guard outside Qin Yun’s hospital room. No outsiders were allowed to come into the room.

After closing the door, Zhang Yu collapsed and cried the tears she’d held in all night.

‘Mum...’ Qin Song said and pulled Zhang Yu up.

Zhang Yu twisted Qin Song’s ear. ‘Bastard!’ Zhang Yu scolded him and cried at the same time. ‘Brat! It’s all your fault for making your dad angry! I hate you!’

Qin Song quietly let Zhang Yu twist his ear until it was on the verge of coming off.

‘Mum, don’t be like that...’ Han Ting Ting said and gently pulled Zhang Yu’s arm. ‘Song Song is sad too. Mum, let go.’

Zhang Yu listened to Han Ting Ting and let go then Zhang Yu sobbed.

Qin Song’s complexion was poor too. He didn’t know what to say. Compared to when he was outside confronting those vultures, inside the room he felt helpless.

A doctor stepped into the room and Qin Song pleaded silently toward Han Ting Ting to look after Zhang Yu. Then he and the doctor went into the living room next door to talk.

‘Yu Yu,’ Qin Yun whispered after Qin Song and the doctor left.

‘I’m here,’ Zhang Yu said gently and wiped her tears before she went to Qin Yun’s bed.

Han Ting Ting followed Zhang Yu. She saw Qin Yun on the bed, pale and weak. But his eyes that looked at Zhang Yu were gentle.

‘Ting Ting, you’re here too?’ Qin Yun asked.

‘Dad!’ Han Ting Ting said in a shaky voice.

‘Um, it’s good you’re here,’ Qin Yun said and nodded.

‘How are you feeling?’ Zhang Yu asked and sat beside him on the bed. She gently stroked his cheek. ‘Smile a bit more.’

Qin Yun held Zhang Yu’s hand and smiled.

‘You scared me to death!’ Zhang Yu gently scolded Qin Yun.

‘I know. I’m sorry,’ Qin Yun said and summoned enough energy to stroke Zhang Yu’s cheek.

The way Qin Yun and Zhang Yu spoke sweetly to one another moved Han Ting Ting deeply. Her eyes and nose stung. Then she quietly left the room to give them privacy.

Inside the hospital the soft lights gave the illusion of a warm spring day. Outside the hospital the night sky was dark and cold. Han Ting Ting carefully closed the door of Qin Yun’s hospital room and heard the soft voices from the living room. When she reached the living room the doctor had left. Qin Song was a lonely statue that stood beside the window.

‘Qin Song!’ Han Ting Ting called. She carefully walked toward Qin Song and stood beside him. ‘What did the doctor say?’

‘The doctor said it’s nothing to worry about,’ Qin Song said weakly that he couldn’t convince himself of the lie.

Han Ting Ting let out a sigh of relief. ‘That’s good... dad’s awake, let’s go see dad.’

Qin Song froze and kept silent.

‘Song Song, don’t be like that,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting held Qin Song’s hand. ‘You fighting with dad isn’t right. But dad being sick isn’t your fault. Yes, you should apologise. You need to say sorry for opposing your dad over trivial matters. You don’t need to say sorry you caused dad’s illness.’

‘Is that true?’ Qin Song asked softly.

Han Ting Ting nodded her head. ‘Of course!’

‘Um,’ Qin Song said awkwardly and led them to Qin Yun’s bed.

That night Qin Yun and Qin Song talked for a long time. It was nearly dawn, Han Ting Ting from a light sleep heard footsteps and opened her sleepy eyes. She saw Qin Song opened the door of the hospital’s guest room.

‘Um... Song Song, what’s the time?’ Han Ting Ting asked.

‘A quarter past five. Go back to sleep,’ Qin Song said and rubbed ‘little country bun’s’ head.

Then Qin Song sat on the sofa beside the bed. He was tired but his heart felt light.

Qin Yun’s hospital room was an exclusive customised room. It had three bedrooms. The spacious main bedroom for the patient, a medium guest bedroom and a smaller guest bedroom. Zhang Yu gave up the medium guest bedroom for the newlyweds so Zhang Yu slept in the smaller guest bedroom. The problem with the medium guest bedroom was that the bed would be a tight squeeze if two people slept on it. Qin Song was adamant he’d curl up on the sofa and Han Ting Ting should take the bed.

Han Ting Ting rubbed her face to wake herself up. Then she got off the bed and pulled Qin Song’s arm. ‘Go sleep on the bed. Let me sleep on the sofa.’

Han Ting Ting’s hair was knotty, her sleepy face was flush pink and her hands pulled Qin Song’s arm like she was pulling a radish out of the ground.

Qin Song laughed. He let Han Ting Ting pull him to the bed. Then he pulled her to sit on the bed next to him.

‘Why don’t we sleep together?’ Qin Song asked teasingly.

Qin Song only wanted to tease ‘little country bun,’ unexpectedly Han Ting Ting thought about it for a while then nodded her head.

‘Um, ok!’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song’s tiredness and the strain of the night made Han Ting Ting’s heart ached. She didn’t want the two of them to be indecisive about who should take the bed all night.

‘Good friends should help each other, regardless of gender,’ Han Ting Ting’s heart whispered.

If ‘little country bun’ was determined to share the bed, Qin Song wasn’t going to disagree. He squeezed into the bed next to Han Ting Ting and covered their bodies with the bed sheet. He couldn’t resist lifting his head, smiled at her and looked at her seductively to tease ‘little country bun.’

Qin Song’s ‘little country bun’ was indeed tensed. Han Ting Ting closed her eyes tightly and slowly inched toward the edge of the bed like a turtle pulling its neck back into its shell.

Qin Song was amused. He poked ‘little country bun’ and caused her to cover her embarrassed face under the bed sheet. The bed was indeed a tight squeeze for the two of them, Han Ting Ting provoked by him almost fell off the bed. Before she could let out a yelp, she held onto his arm to keep herself from falling. He didn’t hesitate to pull her into his chest and adjusted the bed sheet over them.

It was obvious that there were two separate hearts but Qin Song and Han Ting Ting both felt like there was only one heart beating loudly because both their heart beats were in sync continuously.

Qin Song held ‘little country bun’ inside his chest, she was too tensed that she didn’t dare move. He gently brushed his fingers through her soft knotty hair. Their surroundings were eerily quiet. Inside his heart he was secretly happy.

‘I knew it was you... on the night of my birthday, I kissed you,’ Qin Song whispered into Han Ting Ting’s ear.

Qin Song wanted to say that out loud to Han Ting Ting for a long time. It had nothing to do with Chen Yun or the past relating to Qin Sang and Li Wei Ran. That night, when he bent his head to kiss Han Ting Ting, inside his heart it was clear the person he was kissing was no one else but Han Ting Ting. It didn’t

matter the gap of his feelings for Han Ting Ting back on that night compared to their night in the hospital, the person he wanted to kiss and did kiss was Han Ting Ting.

The dawn was radiant, a new day filled with love and happiness. Sunlight spread through the room of a pair of newlyweds who held each other tenderly and neither of them knew when they fell into a peaceful sleep.

‘Ting Bao, Ting Bao...’ Ting’s mum called.

Han Ting Ting in her sleepy state thought it was time to wake up to go to work. She rolled over and stretched her arm to hug Putt Putt. Out of habit she leaned her face against Putt Putt’s face. But she felt that there was something strange about Putt Putt’s face, she pinched Putt Putt and heard Putt Putt cried out. Then Putt Putt’s face buried into her chest.

Ting’s mum saw that not only did her daughter loved to sleep in but her daughter also loved to touch and pinch all over her endearing son-in-law’s body whilst sleeping. Ting’s mum couldn’t bear to watch her son-in-law suffer anymore and hit her daughter’s shoulder. ‘Ting Ting! Wake up!’

Han Ting Ting finally forced herself to wake up. She didn’t know in her sleep that she either pushed Qin Song’s body around the bed or wrapped him into her chest and relentlessly tormented him. In the morning she innocently sat up on the bed and rubbed her sleepy eyes.

Qin Song was still sleepy, he half opened his eyes and innocently looked at Han Ting Ting. Afterward he rolled over and went back to sleep. Han Ting Ting’s flushed bright red, gently and carefully climbed over his body then in her wrinkled clothes stepped down the bed.

Ting’s mum covered Qin Song’s body with the bed sheet. Then she pulled her daughter over and scolded softly. ‘Qin Song’s parents woke up long ago. Kiddo, you have no manners.’

Han Ting Ting bent her head and ashamed enough to not say a word.

Ting’s mum rubbed her daughter’s head. ‘Go wash your face. I brought home cooked dishes.’

Han Ting Ting washed her face in the bathroom then walked to Qin Yun's room. She saw Zhang Yu sat on the sofa beside Qin Yun's bed. Zhang Yu was happily eating buns Ting's mum made.

'Ting Ting, you're awake,' Zhang Yu said, smiled and waved to Han Ting Ting to come toward her. 'Come over here. Your mum's buns are really delicious!'

Qin Yun reached for a tissue and gently wiped Zhang Yu's lips.

'Is Song Song still sleeping?' Qin Yun asked his daughter-in-law.

'Yes Song Song's still sleeping. Dad do you want me to wake him up?' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting noticed Qin Yun's attitude toward Qin Song softened a lot.

'He went to bed late. Don't wake him up. Come here and eat something, because of me you worried all night,' Qin Yun said.

Qin Yun was in a good mood. He turned around and smiled at Ting's mum. 'I'm sorry for being a nuisance. It's still early and you had to bring food for us. Zhang Yu, you're such a child.'

Zhang Yu was too busy eating hot buns, behind her back Qin Yun was winking at Han Ting Ting and Ting's mum.

In the afternoon, Zhang Pu, Li Wei Ran and Qin Sang came to visit Qin Yun. Han Ting Ting didn't know why when she saw Qin Sang, she didn't feel admiration toward Qin Sang like she used to. Instead she felt a strange feeling that was hard for her to put a finger on it.

Qin Yun saw Li Wei Ran and immediately asked about the situation outside. Li Wei Ran thought for a while and didn't reply. Qin Yun knew straight away the reason for Li Wei Ran's silence.

'Those people can't help themselves,' Qin Yun said.

'Qin Song's attitude is important during this critical period, if he doesn't deal with the situation directly then the rest of us are no use,' Li Wei Ran said.

'Uncle... how about I go talk to him one more time?'

Qin Yun quietly shook his head and smiled.

Zhang Yu couldn't hold it in anymore. She wanted to show off in front of Zhang Pu for once. 'Last night Song Song apologised to his dad! Our family have reconciled!'

Zhang Yu deliberately pulled Han Ting Ting's hand, gave Qin Sang a dirty look who stood behind Zhang Pu. 'It's true what they say, it's important to choose an ideal daughter-in-law! Beauty doesn't have much use. It's better to bring someone who is a blessing home!'

Qin Sang dated Qin Song for a short period and Zhang Yu was always dissatisfied with Qin Sang. Many years later Qin Sang was accustomed to Zhang Yu's attitude. Qin Sang could only look away and pretend she didn't hear or understood anything.

Zhang Pu couldn't hold back any longer, smiled and showed Zhang Yu who was the wiser sister in their family. 'I think Ting Ting is beautiful. Why would you say she wasn't beautiful in front of her face?'

Zhang Yu wanted to attack Qin Sang more. Instead Zhang Pu twisted Zhang Yu's words to attack Han Ting Ting and made Zhang Yu startled. Han Ting Ting wanted to ease the tension and diverted their attention. 'Ah, why isn't Song Song still not awake? It's nearly lunch time.'

Suddenly the door was opened and a smiling Qin Song stepped into the room. 'Who's missing me already?'

Zhang Yu saw Qin Song and immediately forgot about the battle with Zhang Pu a few seconds ago. Zhang Yu grinned and pushed Han Ting Ting toward Qin Song. 'Of course it's your wife who misses you!'

Qin Song naturally accepted Han Ting Ting who Zhang Yu delivered to him. He hugged Han Ting Ting into his chest and lowered his head to smile at her.

Han Ting Ting held tightly by Qin Song could smell his refreshed body scent coming out from a shower. Then she remembered they hugged each other all night, her face flushed red and she didn't know where to put her hands.

It was strange... Han Ting Ting felt she was stranger by the day! Before Qin Song also put up a pretense in front of both their parents and hugged her too.

Back then she would blush awkwardly but recently he hugged her more often that it was becoming a normal occurrence. Yet she still struggled to get used to it instead it made her more confused, her heart beat was faster by the day. It was strange that anything relating to him whether it was one look or his scent as each day passed she became more... aware of him. She asked her heart – it wasn't good... right?

However long Qin Song slept was how long his beautiful dreams lasted. In the morning in his half-sleep half-awake state, he was overjoyed 'little country bun' hugged him and wished him a good morning. When he woke up, he closed his eyes and inhaled the scent left behind on Han Ting Ting's pillow. He promised his warm heart that when he returned home he was going to grab Han Ting Ting's shampoo.

That whole day passer-bys came in by the droves. There were people who came to visit the patient and there were people who came to attack the patient. The one common thread was it was Qin Song who had to be hospitable and received the callers that dropped by, he took all them to a bar nearby. Later that night outside the hospital Qin Song sat inside his car and called Han Ting Ting. 'I drank a little too much.'

'You don't need to come up, dad's asleep. I'll come down to find you,' Han Ting Ting said softly and headed outside at the same time.

'Um,' Qin Song said. 'Come down quickly.'

Qin Song's voice was soft and Han Ting Ting suddenly felt worried and ran outside. Qin Song's car was parked in front of the garden, she saw the window wind down half way and he was resting on the backseat with his eyes closed.

'Song Song...' Han Ting Ting called softly.

Qin Song heard Han Ting Ting's voice, opened his eyes and stretched over to open the door for her. 'Come here.'

'Are you tired?' Han Ting Ting asked and closed the door. 'Where's the driver?'

'Something came up and I let the driver go home to take care of it.' Qin Song said.

Qin Song closed his eyes, let out a deep breath, grabbed Han Ting Ting's hand and pulled her closer to him. He placed her hand over his forehead.

Han Ting Ting struggled for a moment, Qin Song's eyes opened and he probed 'little country bun.' She felt strange and didn't know how to express it, her lips mumbled a few sounds and took the initiative to use both her hands to massage him.

The breeze passed through the half open window and the alcohol stench in the car was strong. But Qin Song didn't act like a drunk person. He closed his eyes and stayed silent. His usual sharp motor mouth was silent in the car.

'Are those people causing you trouble?' Han Ting Ting asked gently whilst still massaging him.

'Who?' Qin Song asked. 'Ah, no.'

'Then what's making you unhappy?' Han Ting Ting asked because she felt that Qin Song had grievances on his mind.

Qin Song pulled Han Ting Ting's hands down and clasped her hands. He was gentle toward her and gave her a helpless smile, it was unlike his usual self.

Since little Qin Song was used to calling for rain and wind and he'd receive rain and wind. It was the first time he heard someone directly asked him what was making him unhappy.

'My dad's surgery was unsuccessful,' Qin Song said and exhaled. He finally let it out. 'The doctor said they found another type of cancer and is likely to spread to other regions.'

Han Ting Ting widened her eyes. 'What's going to happen next? Another surgery?'

'I don't know,' Qin Song said and looked outside the window.

Qin Song held her hands tighter and interlocked their fingers. 'Ting Ting, I really regret it.'

He leaned over and hugged her tight. He wanted to trap the only real warmth that belonged to him.

'I regretted the bad relationship between me and my dad that lasted for too

many years, I regretted recklessly doing many things to cause my dad pain and I regretted that none of those things could be taken back,' Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting listened to Qin Song's regrets. Then she remembered her dad's statue expression when they moved houses and it felt like a knife was cutting her heart.

'Song Song,' Han Ting Ting said. She patted Qin Song's back and coaxed him gently. 'It's not your fault. No one can predict the future... You're doing well, continue to stay strong. Your parents only have you. Don't waste your time and energy on guilt.'

Han Ting Ting coaxed Qin Song in her preschool manner and made Qin Song smile. 'I'm not wasting time. I'll find the best doctors to treat my dad. I just feel really sad and didn't have anyone to confide my feelings...'

'You can confide in me,' Han Ting Ting said. 'We're good friends.'

Qin Song suddenly stiffened. Then he pushed her away a little and looked at her with eyes that shone with hope.

'What I said to you last night before sleeping, you didn't hear it?' Qin Song asked. 'I'm serious. Can we try to be together?'

Han Ting Ting was dumbfounded. The whole day she thought about a lot of scenarios and how to respond. But she never expected that Qin Song would give her a straightforward confession.

In Han Ting Ting's small world, anything that got to do with love it was always bottled pain, there was never someone like Qin Song who confessed to her straightforwardly.

Han Ting Ting wasn't used to it, but it was a fresh strange feeling.

'Qin Song,' Han Ting Ting said. 'Have you forgotten? Before we got married we had an agreement...'

Han Ting Ting remembered his cold laugh and that he said she didn't have to worry because she wasn't his type. It wasn't half a year yet and she was worried a lot!

Qin Song dismissed her diversion. 'I'm asking you if you want to. What are you

doing bringing up the past for?’

Han Ting Ting shook her head. ‘I... don’t want to.’

Qin Song was furious. ‘Then why did you hug me this morning?’

‘I didn’t...’ Han Ting Ting denied. ‘Ah... I was half-asleep and I thought I was at home. I mistook you for Putt Putt...’

Qin Song’s face darkened and he gritted his teeth. His heart cursed ‘little country bun’ – You’re a piece of work!

‘Forget it!’ Qin Song said coldly. ‘It’s nothing. I just wanted a try to see what it’ll be like.’

Qin Song choked. He turned away and waited. But Han Ting Ting didn’t have a shred of regret instead she sighed in relief like she got rid of a heavy burden then she smiled comfortably.

‘Ok, let’s go home,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song gritted his teeth. ‘Han-Ting-Ting!’ He sat straight and glared at ‘little country bun.’ ‘Why don’t you want to?’

Han Ting Ting didn’t know why herself. At the start Qin Song didn’t allow her to fall for him. Was that why in the time they’ve known each other she reminded herself daily to remember their agreement? Then when he suddenly changed his mind, her first response was to reject it?

It was like when Han Ting Ting was little and had cavities. Her mum didn’t allow her to buy chocolates to eat. Later she didn’t know why after she lost all her baby teeth she didn’t dare to eat chocolate. Years later, someone like her who craved sweets avoided anything that had chocolate as an ingredient.

Han Ting Ting was scared if she didn’t give him an answer he considered was a proper answer then it’d make him angry. ‘Then why do you want to? Before you didn’t like me.’

Qin Song was completely speechless.

Qin Song didn’t know why he wanted to give it a try with ‘little country bun.’ Did he like her simple easy going nature? Or did he like that she was decent and a good listener?

Was it because during a difficult period, he couldn't cope with all the responsibilities on his own and Han Ting Ting was the only one beside him?

Perhaps it was simply because he was a man and she was a woman and as they stayed in one spot together the smoke would eventually flare up and become a fire? Toward love, he'd always relied on intuition. He'd never thought about it carefully.

'I don't know,' Qin Song said directly. 'I think... you're a good person.'

Qin Song's face blushed pink and coughed twice. 'Besides, we're already married.'

'But we said that we would only be married for one year,' Han Ting Ting said softly.

Qin Song was driven crazy. He narrowed his eyes. 'Han Ting Ting, when you're with me, you only think about divorcing me, right? After you divorced me, you'll go and be a step-mum for Dong Dong, right?'

Han Ting Ting was speechless. At the start she agreed to marry Qin Song because she didn't want her parents to hurt because of her and end all those arranged dates. Qin Song was right, she did think about those things. But living with Qin Song many things have happened that wasn't monopolised by that person. She wasn't like before, in a daze only thought about that person and Dong Dong.

Qin Song saw Han Ting Ting's daze and felt insulted! He couldn't accept it! His legitimate wife was right in front of him and dared to think fondly of another man? And straight after he confessed too!

'Let's go home!' Qin Song said. 'Go to the front seat and drive!'

Han Ting Ting was startled out of her daze. 'But I don't know how to drive.'

The strong alcohol stench was all around Qin Song. He smiled coldly. 'Want me to drive?'

'Forget it, let me drive,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting took a while before she summoned enough courage and sat on the driver's seat.

End of Chapter Six (Part 2 of 2)

Related

Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven

Qin Yun had to stay in the hospital for one month and he didn't feel safe leaving Zhang Yu at home by herself. Qin Yun asked Qin Song to let Zhang Yu stay with Qin Song and Han Ting Ting whilst Qin Yun was in the hospital. After Qin Song arrived home from the hospital, he let Han Ting Ting know Zhang Yu was staying with them.

Han Ting Ting tensed. 'Staying here?'

'Um,' Qin Song said whilst looking at documents and didn't bother to lift his head or answer properly.

'Will... will... will... will we be staying in the same room?' Han Ting Ting stuttered.

Qin Song lifted his head from the complex documentation that gave him a headache and vented on Han Ting Ting. 'Do you think I want to stay in the same room as you?'

Han Ting Ting heard the annoyance in Qin Song's tone and was too scared to say anything else in case it made him angry.

Since that day outside the hospital and Qin Song was drunk and asked Han Ting Ting if she wanted to try being together with him, he distanced himself from her. Before, when they were home together, he used to tease her and boss her around... at least back then he'd talked and teased her, not like recently, he stopped bothering to make eye contact with her and if it wasn't necessary he rarely talked to her anymore.

The more Han Ting Ting thought about the distance between her and Qin Song the more depressed she felt.

Zhang Yu on the other hand was obviously happy. Zhang Yu loved gossiping with Han Ting Ting and wanted to sleep with Han Ting Ting to talk through the night. But Qin Song adamantly refused. 'She has to sleep with me!'

Zhang Yu's eyes became teary. She pulled Qin Song's shirt and sulked. 'But I

have trouble sleeping on my own.'

'You can take this to help you sleep,' Qin Song said. He grabbed Putt Putt from Han Ting Ting's arms and gave it to Zhang Yu. 'It's called Putt Putt.'

Zhang Yu hated it and pushed it away. It was an old teddy with a blue sweater. 'It's ugly. I don't want it.'

Han Ting Ting quietly turned away, hugged Putt Putt and went back to stand beside Qin Song. Qin Song saw Zhang Yu's pitiful teary eyes and deliberately took Han Ting Ting upstairs to tease Zhang Yu. In Qin Song's room he'd temporarily forgot to retrieve his gentle expression. Then he saw Han Ting Ting buttering him up with smiles, he pursed his lips and vented. 'What are you happy about? You're such a dummy. I was scared you'll crumble under my mum's questioning and your loose lips will confess everything to her. Do you think I really want to sleep with you?'

Han Ting Ting gently slapped her sore cheeks from laughing and smiling too much. Qin Song was paying attention to her. It didn't matter if he was moody as long as he acknowledged she existed made her happy.

Qin Song saw 'little country bun's' good mood wasn't affected. He pushed her onto the bed then went to the bathroom to shower.

Sleeping on the same bed... neither Qin Song nor Han Ting Ting felt comfortable.

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting laid shoulder to shoulder under the bed sheet, they both crossed their arms over their chest and their legs were straightened. It was obvious the night was quiet but neither of them could sleep.

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting tried to control their heart beats to no avail. Their hearts kept pounding to the same rhythm as each other's breathing. If he took in a deep breath then her heart would beat faster. A short time later, both of them had trouble breathing. She rolled over to turn away from him and he sat up on the bed.

'Han Ting Ting!' Qin Song called out in the middle of the night. 'Get rid of that molting teddy!'

Qin Song was allergic to dust and that old teddy made his nose itchy.

Han Ting Ting was on the verge of entering the realm of dreams when Qin Song's outburst shattered the room's silence.

'Putt Putt doesn't molt... I'm used to hugging Putt Putt to sleep,' Han Ting Ting said softly.

'What's so great about that bald and old teddy?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song couldn't accept it, it was a raggy teddy and Han Ting Ting made clothes for it, hugged it each night to sleep and treated it better than she treated him!

Han Ting Ting sat up on the bed. 'I know you're angry with me but don't take it out on Putt Putt.'

Qin Song snorted and his heart cursed Han Ting Ting – So you did know I'm angry with you!

'I've thought it through... Qin Song, we've lived together for a long period now. Sometimes you can be unreasonable. But you treat me and my parents well. You've helped me a lot. I'm grateful toward you,' Han Ting Ting said and paused.

Han Ting Ting needed a moment... not right, she needed a lot of courage to continue.

Qin Song heard enough. His heart sobbed. He was a healthy young man, handsome, smart, generous and very appealing. In his life he'd confessed his love twice and both times he was rejected. Worst was receiving the constellation prize of 'you're a good person' plaque.

'Don't say anything else!' Qin Song said. His depressed heart couldn't take it if Han Ting Ting continued on. 'That day I was drunk. It was rambling of a drunk person. Don't go thinking it was the truth!'

It was Han Ting Ting's turn to be tensed. She didn't get to finish... it was lucky... she didn't finish...

'I'm sleepy. Go to sleep!' Qin Song said.

Qin Song didn't care whether Putt Putt was molting or not, he collapsed on the bed, pulled the bed sheet over his head and closed his eyes.

Qin Song felt it hurt too much! His heart was bleeding... he bit the bed sheet to

stop himself from sobbing.

At Liang's company building, before a morning meeting.

Big boss and Li Wei Ran haven't arrived. Rong Yan, Chen Yu Bai and Ji Nan were eating breakfast. Qin Song's head was buried into his paperwork. Ji Nan gauged Qin Song's mood for a while.

'Sixth brother... your complexion isn't good,' Ji Nan said whilst chewing a piece of pineapple.

Rong Yan glanced at Qin Song. 'It's normal to be like that when you have an active and happy married life.'

Chen Yu Bai put his cup of coffee down. He pushed up the bridge of his glasses. 'Are you certain that Qin Song got to eat enough to satisfy his hunger?'

'Nope!' Rong Yan opened the newspaper in his hands. 'I reckon Qin Song hasn't eaten yet and he's starving like crazy.'

The three people who were on the same wavelength turned to each other and laughed.

Qin Song lost it and tossed his pen. 'Are you guys gunning for a fight this early in the morning?'

Chen Yu Bai flexed his wrist in a 'no problem' manner, he was happy to oblige. Ji Nan cracked her knuckles... Rong Yan wanted to wipe away the bad vibes in the room and pulled Qin Song into another room to settle with words instead with fists.

The sworn brothers have always unified to face adversaries together. The situation between Qin Song and Han Ting Ting, Rong Yan knew a bit about it. Qin Song let go his image and recounted his marriage from the start to the heartbreaking 'you're a good person' constellation prize.

At the mention of females there was no one more clear about females than second brother Rong Yan who was an infamous former player. After Rong Yan heard about Qin Song's pretend act turning into real love, Rong Yan became serious, rubbed his chin and thought deeply.

‘What should I do now?’ Qin Song asked.

Rong Yan grinned, lifted his handsome chin at Qin Song’s watch. Rong Yan coveted Qin Song’s watch since he’d seen Qin Song wore it. Rong Yan didn’t know what brand or who the seller of that watch was. Rong Yan had searched for it everywhere and didn’t find a single clue about the origins of that watch. Qin Song wore it every day and never parted with it made Rong Yan more curious about it.

Qin Song saw Rong Yan lusting after his watch and became unusually stingy and covered his watch away from the critter’s sight. ‘You can’t have this! Change it to something else.’

‘Is it that expensive?’ Rong Yan asked. ‘More expensive than your new car?’

‘I’ll give you my new car!’ Qin Song said. ‘Hurry up and help me!’

Rong Yan narrowed his former player’s eyes and smiled deviously.

‘What about that one... or do you prefer that one? Quickly choose. I like that one, oh, I like that one too! Two of that, ah, make it three,’ Zhang Yu said.

Zhang Yu clapped her hands joyfully. After Zhang Yu almost seen all the items listed then turned to Han Ting Ting. ‘Ting Ting, have we chosen enough to get free shipping?’

A stunned Han Ting Ting clicked on the order button. ‘Mum, we’ve gone beyond the free shipping condition. We only need to spend two hundred dollars for free shipping.’

‘Ah, what a good incentive,’ Zhang Yu said.

It was Zhang Yu’s first online shopping experience and she was beyond excited.

Han Ting Ting was speechless. She couldn’t believe for free shipping Zhang Yu bought over one thousand dollars worth of merchandise... she didn’t know what to say.

‘Let’s buy pyjamas for Song Song!’ Zhang Yu said and looked through the pyjamas listing. ‘What colour looks good? Ting Ting, what colour do you think suits Song Song?’

Han Ting Ting clicked on the coral pink pyjamas. 'Mum, what do you think about this colour?'

'That's pink,' Zhang Yu said. 'Song Song wearing... will he want to wear it?'

Han Ting Ting nodded convincingly.

Zhang Yu felt it was strange. She remembered since Qin Song was little he hated pink the most. Why did he hide his secret love of pink from her?

'Ding dong,' the doorbell rang.

Han Ting Ting was helping Zhang Yu cooking in the kitchen. So an assistant chef ran to the door and returned to the kitchen with a large bouquet of red roses that were beautiful fresh blooms and would deeply move hearts.

Zhang Yu shyly stretched her arms to receive the bouquet. 'Is it for me?'

The assistant chef smiled and shook their head. 'It's from the young master. He sent someone to deliver the roses to his wife and there's an invitation too.'

Han Ting Ting was speechless. She received the roses in front of Zhang Yu who was obviously envious. Han Ting Ting's eyes were misty. She opened the invitation. Qin Song scribbled on the invitation with his careless handwriting – 'Eight, tonight.'

After 'tonight' there was a shape that suspiciously looked like a love heart.

'What did he write?' Zhang Yu asked.

Zhang Yu was more curious than envious.

Han Ting Ting gave the invitation to Zhang Yu. 'Mum, does it mean that Song Song is coming home at eight and wants us to prepare a late dinner for him?'

Zhang Yu felt triumphant. She'd found a way to get back at her ungrateful son, who only gave roses to his wife but didn't give roses to his mother the one that gave him life!

Zhang Yu smiled slyly and firmly nodded. 'Ting Ting, tonight make a delicious meal for Song Song. He gave you such a beautiful bouquet of red roses!'

'Thanks mum!' Han Ting Ting said. 'Later I'll go to the shops to buy food.'

At half past seven at night, Qin Song's driver went to escort Han Ting Ting to the reserved restaurant to meet Qin Song. But when Han Ting Ting opened the door it shocked the driver. The driver saw her wore a T-shirt, track suit pants and slippers.

The driver's phone rang and the caller was Qin Song. The driver passed the phone to Han Ting Ting.

Han Ting Ting heard Qin Song's 'hello' and it sounded unusual like he was holding back and was in a hurry to confess something.

'Are you ready?' Qin Song said. 'I'm waiting for you.'

'I'm ready! I'm waiting for you too,' Han Ting Ting said. 'Where are you?'

'Didn't you receive the roses and invitation?' Qin Song asked.

'They were delivered. I prepared dinner to eat at eight. Mum and I are waiting for you to eat together,' Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song gritted his teeth. 'HanTing-Ting! You wait there for me!'

The driver immediately left without the young master's wife.

Han Ting Ting in a confused state walked back into the kitchen and looked helplessly at Zhang Yu who was happily sampling vegetable soup.

'Mum, I think Song Song isn't happy,' Han Ting Ting said.

Zhang Yu bit a cucumber dish. In front of the delicious meal, Zhang Yu was able to deceive her innocent daughter-in-law. Zhang Yu smiled happily.

Qin Song returned home in a darkened mood. He bypassed his mother and grabbed 'little country bun' upstairs into his room.

'How dare you stand me up?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song waited since seven at the restaurant. After he called Han Ting Ting the restaurant owner asked what time the food should be brought out. He didn't say anything and bolted. He was humiliated!

‘It was written clearly on the invitation!’ Qin Song said.

‘You only wrote eight, tonight... I thought you’ll be back at eight for dinner...’ Han Ting Ting said softly.

‘You... you... can you be any more of a dummy?’ Qin Song asked. He was angry enough that his hand trembled, the hand that held onto Han Ting Ting. ‘I’m angry to death!’

Han Ting Ting cringed. She looked at Qin Song and didn’t know what to say. All these years if her dad or Tu Tu were angry, she only needed to avoid them until their anger passed. If her mum was angry, her mum never vented on her. Qin Song was the first person she met that she caused him to be angry over every little thing she did.

Having someone whose mood swings depended on another person’s behaviour was a heavy burden, especially a timid person like Han Ting Ting. She was always scared Qin Song would be unhappy but because of her, he was always unhappy. Living with him, she always had to be cautious and thought deeply.

Han Ting Ting didn’t say anything. She looked like she didn’t want to be at tug of war with him anymore. His initial feeling when he got home was anger. Then he saw her eyes that looked like she wanted to be far away from him as possible made him frustrated. He’d been overworked to take care of business at both Liang’s company and Qin’s company. He also had to deal with those vultures at Qin’s company. In order to go out to eat dinner with her, he was busy all day and didn’t have time to eat lunch. He didn’t expect her to change her mind after one dinner date but he thought she’d at least appreciate all the efforts he went to plan their dinner date!

Ah! That bastard Rong Yan! What was that dribble about being deeply moved? What was that about it being a sure winner? What was that about how women couldn’t resist? Rong Yan, give back my car! Ah, Rong Yan that cheater!

Qin Song frowned and walked out of his room. Following behind him was Han Ting Ting who was framed by Zhang Yu. The betrayer Zhang Yu had stood with her ear glued to Qin Song’s door. To not be caught, she’d to run like crazy to

return to the sofa in the living room and pretend she'd been surfing online on the laptop the whole time.

A depressed Qin Song greeted his mum and was about to go back upstairs but suddenly he turned around and couldn't believe what he saw. 'Mum are you surfing online?'

'Um,' Zhang Yu said and pointed at Han Ting Ting. 'Ting Ting taught me. We spent the afternoon shopping online. We even bought you a gift!'

Qin Song stiffened and looked at Han Ting Ting. 'Is our home internet fixed?'

Han Ting Ting didn't turn around to look at him and only silently nodded her head.

Zhang Yu quickly took the credit. 'It was me who called someone to fix the home internet. It only needed a bit of adjusting.'

Qin Song was speechless. His whole body felt cold. He was busted!

'Ah, Song Song,' Zhang Yu said and smiled. 'While your dad's at the hospital, I'll be renovating our home as a surprise for your dad. I've ordered pink wallpaper for your old room. But when did you start liking the colour pink? Was it after you got married?'

Qin Song's heart was already shattered. The mention of pink wallpaper added another cold layer over his heart... he was never going to have a moment of peace for the rest of his life!

Qin Song quietly took his soulless body upstairs.

'Are you two fighting?' Zhang Yu asked.

'No, we're not fighting,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting smiled weakly and wrung her wrist.

'Was it because you didn't go on the date?' Zhang Yu asked.

'I... I didn't know he meant to eat at a restaurant at eight,' Han Ting Ting said and lowered her head.

'Ah, it's my fault. I knew what he meant but didn't tell you,' Zhang Yu said. She felt ashamed of herself. 'It was his fault too. He got you roses and invited you out

to eat dinner. I was jealous...'

'Mum...' Han Ting Ting said softly. 'It's nothing. I'll explain it to him.'

'Um,' Zhang Yu agreed. She pushed Han Ting Ting upstairs. 'Quickly go reconcile with him. The two of you go outside and eat. Don't come back tonight and have a romantic night!'

Han Ting Ting was pushed all the way upstairs. After she knocked on Qin Song's door, Zhang Yu made an escape and left her to face him alone inside his room.

Qin Song was inside the walk in wardrobe changing his clothes. He took off his jacket and tie. His shirt collar was opened.

'What are you doing here?' Qin Song asked coldly.

'Let's eat dinner... I made chicken soup,' Han Ting Ting said.

'I don't want to eat,' Qin Song said. He pulled out a draw. 'Go outside, I'm taking a shower.'

Han Ting Ting took out Qin Song's clothes for him. 'After you shower come downstairs and eat. I'll be waiting for you.'

Qin Song was startled to hear Han Ting Ting gently saying she'd be waiting for him. He turned around to face her.

'Qin Song... don't be angry anymore. I didn't not go on purpose,' Han Ting Ting said and lowered her head. 'It was because... there's never been anyone who'd given me roses before and no one invited me out on a date before either. That's why I didn't know you wanted to go out at eight for dinner. I thought you meant you'd be home at eight and I wanted to make dinner ready for you when you got home.'

Han Ting Ting took each task seriously, especially when clearing a misunderstanding between her and Qin Song. Suddenly he felt deeply moved.

'Ahem...' Qin Song coughed and turned away. He pretended he needed something else from another draw. 'What if you knew?'

'If I knew... I would go,' Han Ting Ting said and blushed red.

The spacious walk in wardrobe suddenly felt cramped and made it hard to

breathe in air. Qin Song kept pulling draws. Han Ting Ting stood frozen and embarrassed.

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting both awkwardly enjoyed the uncomfortable feeling in their hearts.

‘I’ll put your clothes here,’ Han Ting Ting said and broke the sweet silence.

Han Ting Ting saw he kept putting his head into different draws, particularly she noticed that his nape flushed red. She didn’t have the heart to let him choke inside a draw. ‘Go shower, I’ll go downstairs first.’

‘Ah, wait...’ Qin Song said. At the critical moment, his animal instinct kicked in and he quickly lifted his head out of the suffocating draw. He grabbed Han Ting Ting’s hand. ‘Let’s... go downstairs together. I’m hungry.’

Han Ting Ting’s hand became hot but Qin Song didn’t let go.

Han Ting Ting’s face turned brighter red and she kept her head facing the front. Qin Song took a deep breath in then exhaled lightly. He was flooded with joy. ‘Little country bun’s’ hand turned pink.

Qin Song promised himself that from that moment onward, he’d convert to become a fanatic fan of the colour pink.

Zhang Yu saw Qin Song coming downstairs before he showered and was worried that he was still angry. ‘Song Song, don’t be angry anymore. It was my fault. I made Ting Ting believed that you wanted her to make dinner and wait for you. It was your fault too for only buying roses for your wife.’

‘Um, it’s nothing,’ Qin Song said in an easy going way and smiled. ‘Mum, I’ll send you roses another day.’

Zhang Yu was shocked at the sight of Qin Song well behaved at the dining table. His eyes were drawn to Han Ting Ting. He smiled after receiving a bowl of rice from Han Ting Ting and the two of them exchanged secret glances with each other... Zhang Yu had a revelation... Qin Song liked the colour pink that matched Han Ting Ting’s embarrassed complexion!

‘Ting Ting, Tu Tu said she shipped our purchases already,’ Zhang Yu said. She

closed the laptop and stood. 'Tu Tu also said she sent us a small gift.'

Qin Song the lover of pink heard about a mystery gift from Tu Tu and his hand that held the bowl trembled.

'Um, mum, let's eat dinner,' Han Ting Ting said.

'I'm not eating at home. I'm going to go to the hospital to eat with your dad,' Zhang Yu said.

'Ok, let me go find containers,' Han Ting Ting said and stood.

'I asked the assistant chef to pack the food already. Ting Ting sit down and eat dinner,' Zhang Yu said. She patted Han Ting Ting's shoulder then patted Qin Song's shoulder. 'I'm sorry for spoiling your date together. I'll give you two your privacy back. Enjoy your night together!'

Zhang Yu and the assistant chef left the shy newlyweds at the dining table.

Han Ting Ting felt more uncomfortable. She thought if Qin Song's mood improved than her mood would improve. But after clearing their misunderstanding she felt more awkward around him.

'Ahem...' Qin Song coughed. He sat shoulder to shoulder with Han Ting Ting so she could still hear him if he stared in front of him. 'Your old phone... I threw it out the window.'

Han Ting Ting slowly put her chopsticks down.

'I saw the texts between you and Tu Tu. I couldn't control myself and sent a text to her... I was scared you'd find out and impulsively threw it out the window. The home internet and home phone wasn't broken, I tampered with it,' Qin Song said and turned a little to face Han Ting Ting. 'I'm sorry.'

'A few days ago I already knew... the phone you gave me has internet data, I got into contact with Tu Tu online,' Han Ting Ting said and smiled.

The phone Qin Song gave Han Ting Ting had internet data... he was speechless. He buried his head into his bowl and cursed himself for forgetting about the features of the phone he gave her.

'I was wrong too. I shouldn't have gossiped with Tu Tu about... you,' Han Ting Ting said.

‘Let’s eat dinner,’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting picked up a chicken wing that Qin Song liked eating and held it to his mouth. ‘Eat the chicken wing.’

Han Ting Ting’s shaky hand accidentally dropped the chicken wing into his bowl of soup and water splashed onto Qin Song’s handsome face.

Han Ting Ting rushed to pass a tissue to Qin Song.

‘It’s nothing,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song held onto Han Ting Ting’s wrist whilst she wiped his face. His eyes were closed and he could feel how gentle she wiped his face. He wished that it would take a long time for the grease to come off his face. He didn’t mind if it didn’t come off as long she was the one wiping.

The following day during a morning meeting at Liang’s company, a certain somebody who was a lover of pink, wore a satisfied smile and greeted everyone happily.

Ji Nan chewed a piece of pineapple in her mouth and couldn’t believe her own eyes and grilled Li Wei Ran. ‘That fast... sixth brother got to eat that fast?’

Li Wei Ran bit a piece of toast and didn’t believe what he saw either. ‘How is it possible for someone after getting love advice from Rong Yan can seduce an innocent girl?’

Big boss who had experience of failing to score after getting love advice from Rong Yan, knew it wasn’t true. ‘Impossible!’

Rong Yan shook his new car keys in front of them. It was the best evidence to turning non-believers into believers.

Chen Yu Bai pushed the bridge of his glasses up and faced the prime witness. ‘You scored?’

‘Don’t speak crudely. Do you guys understand respect?’ Qin Song said.

Chen Yu Bai laughed coldly and lifted his cup of coffee. ‘I knew it. Those two heads joined together, how could it go smoothly?’

Everyone laughed and returned to their work, except the lover of pink and the new car owner. They silently acknowledged they needed a round two strategy to silence the smug laughter.

A disappointed Rong Yan pulled Qin Song aside. 'Did you fail?'

Qin Song shook his head but his delirious smile didn't disappear. It gave Rong Yan the shivers and he knocked on the love sick Qin Song's head.

'Was your confession successful or not?' Rong Yan asked.

Qin Song laughed happily. 'Not yet... but it can be considered as sealed deal too.'

Qin Song tugged on Rong Yan's shirt and Rong Yan couldn't stand looking at Qin Song's puppy eyes anymore. 'What are you doing?'

'Second brother, show some more of your tricks,' Qin Song pleaded.

That day Han Ting Ting was at the hospital.

Qin Yun and Zhang Yu were reading and talking to one another in the hospital room. Outside the hospital room Han Ting Ting guarded the door to prevent vultures sneaking into the room and disturbing Qin Yun's recovery. Han Ting Ting didn't need to have supernatural strength to guard the door. All she needed to do was stand at the door, because no one dared to hurt Qin Song's wife.

At the end of the day, Qin Yun saw Han Ting Ting's forced smile.

'Ting Ting, are you tired?' Qin Yun asked.

Han Ting Ting nodded her head. 'No wonder Song Song is always tired.'

'Serves him right!' Qin Yun said. 'In the past he didn't listen to anything I taught him.'

'He doesn't like listening to anyone's opinion,' Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Yun's face lit up. He found his kindred spirit. 'That's right! Song Song since a kid was too spoiled, arrogant and never bows down to anyone. I wished I found an opportunity in the past to discipline him. In the future... it's too late. You're

the first person beside Qin Song that agrees with me! All his relatives, especially Zhang Yu give him everything he wants!’

Han Ting Ting agreed whole heartedly with everything Qin Yun said about Qin Song. She could see that Qin Yun intimidated men double his size but was scared of opposing Zhang Yu in case it made Zhang Yu sad. Even though Qin Yun knew that he should have stepped in to reign in Qin Song but Qin Yun chose not to interfere because Qin Yun listened to everything his wife said. Han Ting Ting thought if in the future she and Qin Song had a child... her heart stopped. What was she doing picturing their child?

After work Qin Song picked up Han Ting Ting from the hospital. On the way home at a traffic light close to home, Qin Song rested his head on the steering wheel.

‘Are you tired?’ Han Ting Ting asked.

Qin Song lifted his head and nodded. Then he smiled suggestively at ‘little country bun.’

‘Oh... let’s hurry home. I made a delicious meal for you,’ Han Ting Ting said to her knees instead of facing Qin Song’s burning stare.

Qin Song laughed. ‘Is that the only thing you’ll give me?’

‘Um, that’s it,’ Han Ting Ting said weakly.

Qin Song pinched Han Ting Ting’s cheek and she yelped. It woke him up.

The cars piled up behind them beeped and stuck their head out of the window to swear at Qin Song. It didn’t affect Qin Song’s good mood, he was excited to test out a new trick Rong Yan taught him to win over ‘little country bun.’

At home, Qin Song pulled Han Ting Ting onto the sofa.

‘You haven’t ate dinner yet, it’s almost nine,’ Han Ting Ting said. ‘Song Song, you’ve been overworked each night.’

‘Five minutes, give me five minutes. I want to show you a magic trick,’ Qin

Song said.

Han Ting Ting played along and sat on the sofa with Qin Song. He took out a beautiful platinum chain from his trousers. He hung it on a finger and swung it back and forth in front of her.

‘Watch carefully!’ Qin Song said.

He took out his left hand that was left in his trousers. He took a deep breath and was about to open his left hand... when in a blink of an eye all the lights in the house turned off.

The last thing Han Ting Ting saw was the string in Qin Song’s hands sparkle before everything became pitch black.

‘Wow... that was magical!’ Han Ting Ting praised.

The amateur magician didn’t think it was magical.

‘Song Song... can you make the lights turn on again? I want to cook dinner for you,’ Han Ting Ting said.

‘I didn’t make the lights turn off,’ the disgruntled amateur magician said. ‘It’s a blackout.’

Han Ting Ting bit her tongue to stop from laughing.

‘Song Song... be careful,’ Han Ting Ting said.

‘Don’t move. Hold on tight,’ Qin Song said.

‘Um, slow down,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting’s one hand held... a flashlight, her other hand held... a ladder. ‘Song Song, let’s wait until tomorrow for an electrician to fix it.’

‘No. I want to finish the magic trick,’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting shone the flashlight at Qin Song and the fuse box. She stared up at him focused on finding the right switch to turn the lights back on. His focus was a familiar feeling... like it was what she’d been waiting to see since she was a kid.

What Han Ting Ting wanted was someone who stayed beside her, treated her well, hold her hand in the dark, hug her on stormy days, stronger than Putt Putt and gentler than her dad.

Han Ting Ting thought that someone was that person. But she was wrong. That person only gave her glimpses of joy and the rest was unrequited love. As she looked up the ladder and watched Qin Song wanting to turn the lights back on to perform a magic trick for her... her heart jumped up and down and cried out... 'it's him, it's the right person.'

Qin Song looked down to ask Han Ting Ting to lift the flashlight higher. But he was distracted by her smiling up at him in a daze and the flashlight shone on her soft hair that he wanted to...

Qin Song looked away and his shaky hand turned on a switch and all the lights turned on. He exhaled gently and was about to jump down the ladder... 'boom' followed by a burst of sparks and everything blackened.

The thundering boom shocked Han Ting Ting, she let go of the ladder and let out a scream. The ladder was about to fall onto Han Ting Ting's body. He jumped down and shielded her body but his left arm was unprotected.

'Song Song!' Han Ting Ting called in the safety of Qin Song's chest.

'I'm ok... are you hurt anywhere?' Qin Song asked weakly.

'I'm ok,' Han Ting Ting said and massaged all over Qin Song's body. 'Where are you hurt?'

'Ah, don't move. I think my left arm is broken... sit up carefully and call the ambulance,' Qin Song said.

Later that night the amateur magician's left hand was wrapped in a cast at the hospital. Whilst the amateur magician's teacher was having a relaxing bubble bath with background music.

'Daddy!' Rong Deng called.

'Deng Deng, why aren't you sleeping?' Rong Yan asked.

'I'm not sleepy. Daddy, you have a phone call. It's sixth uncle,' Rong Deng said.

‘Daddy hasn’t finished his bath yet. Give the phone to mummy,’ Rong Yan said.

‘Mummy did listen to sixth uncle then rolled on the bed laughing,’ Rong Deng said.

‘Oh? Pass the phone to daddy,’ Rong Yan said.

Rong Deng passed the phone to Rong Yan. She didn’t forget to splash water and bubbles onto Rong Yan’s face before laughing and running out.

Rong Yan had the last laugh as his apprentice recounted how the magic trick Rong Yan taught his apprentice failed.

‘You cheater! Give me back my car!’ the disgruntled amateur magician demanded.

End of Chapter Seven

Related

part 1

Chapter Eight (Part 1)

Qin Song's left hand was officially... broken.

Zhang Yu drew a chicken on Qin Song's cast. For the eightieth time she tried to pry her son's tight lips. 'Song Song, what magic trick did you want to show Ting Ting that made you break your left arm?'

Qin Song laid on the sofa, his right arm draped over his face and pretended he died.

Qin Yun pulled his wife. 'Zhang Yu... stop asking him.'

'I want Song Song to show me a magic trick too,' Zhang Yu sulked.

Qin Yun sighed helplessly. 'Do you want our son to break his right arm too?'

Zhang Yu shook her head, let go of Qin Song and stopped asking about his first and last failed attempt performing a magic trick.

Han Ting Ting farewelled the electrician and returned to the room. 'The electrician finished fixing the fuse box.'

'Fixed that quick?' Zhang Yu said heartlessly.

Qin Song's left arm was broken but both of his unbroken ears heard Zhang Yu's unintentional jab. He got up from the sofa and put on his slippers.

'Song Song, where are you going?' Zhang Yu asked.

'To the bathroom,' Qin Song said.

'One arm isn't convenient,' Zhang Yu said. 'Ting Ting, go help your husband.'

Han Ting Ting was drinking apple juice and almost choked on it after she was requested to go to the bathroom with Qin Song.

'Qin Song,' Han Ting Ting called from outside the bathroom door. 'Are you done?'

'Why?' Qin Song asked.

‘Mum asked me to ask you if you need my help,’ Han Ting Ting said and her hands covered her hot face.

Han Ting Ting didn’t hear any sounds from the bathroom. A moment later the door was opened... her radiant rescuer stood in front of her with one hand pulling his pants... her poor face was boiled red but couldn’t look away.

Qin Song scrunched his face. He wanted to pull his ‘little country bun’ into the bathroom. But his left arm was supported by a sling in front of his chest and his right hand was busy keeping his pants up.

‘Come in,’ Qin Song said.

A dazed Han Ting Ting quietly followed Qin Song into the bathroom. The bathroom was not small but having two people inside at the same time cramped the bathroom.

Qin Song pointed at his pants. ‘Button my pants for me.’

Qin Song was never going to buy pants with buttons again. He spent a long time trying to button his pants with one hand but the button refused to go through the button hole.

Han Ting Ting immediately bent over to button Qin Song’s pants. Her eyes were at eye level with his pants and she suddenly remembered the day he threw her phone out the window and her text conversation with Tu Tu – ‘How’s the size of his package?’ ‘One... big package!’

Han Ting Ting’s face felt completely melted and she was scared she’d need to have a face implant to replace it.

Qin Song’s male pride was injured from his failed magic performance. He searched around the sofa and didn’t find the gift he prepared for Han Ting Ting. It must have been flung off the string. To top off his failure, he couldn’t fix the fuse box and ended up with a broken arm. Why did he always show the most embarrassing side of himself in front of her? But her shyness trying to carefully button his pants returned his manliness. He watched her struggle to button his pants for a while. She kept unzipping then zipping his zipper to bring the button and the button hole closer together. It made him realised along with the return of his manliness, his attraction toward her was fully evident between her tensed

hands.

‘Pull... pull... pull... I can’t pull it up,’ Han Ting Ting stuttered.

Han Ting Ting’s radiant rescuer bent his head down and bit her red lips. She was stunned and before she could react she was already pressed to his chest. His lips seized her lips, his tongue was inside her mouth and in a frenzy wrestled with her tongue.

Qin Song heard weak moans escaped from Ting Ting’s throat then her body was limp on his chest and his whole body was lit on fire. He tightened his hold around her waist and pulled her closer to his chest. Everywhere his fingers touched was soft. The mouth he swallowed trembled then the rest of her body trembled. He pulled her closer to him until it was hard to breathe. Even if he deprived both of them air, he didn’t want to let her go.

Ting Ting felt there was no air going into her body. Qin Song’s hold on her increasingly became tighter. When she felt she was going to be unconscious, he loosened his arm around her waist. She leaned into his chest and he rested his forehead onto her forehead. They were both breathing heavily. She was able to rest for no longer than five seconds before his body pressed against her body.

Qin Song felt Ting Ting’s body was burning hot. He kissed her and his fingers wandered inside her shirt. He caressed her waist and slowly moved upward. Under his fingers was soft skin and loveable goose bumps rose wherever his fingers lingered for too long. In his crazy haze he realised he lost control of his senses. His tongue mingled with her tongue. He gave into his urge and bit her tongue. She cried out in pain. Her sweaty forehead pulled away from his own sweaty forehead and she pushed him back. He lifted his arm to pull her back but she opened the door and fled from the bathroom.

Zhang Yu heard a muffled cry from the bathroom. A moment later Zhang Yu saw her darling daughter-in-law running outside like there was a beast chasing her from behind.

‘What happened?’ Zhang Yu asked.

‘A a o a o...’ Han Ting Ting muttered.

Han Ting Ting wanted to say nothing was wrong. But her bitten tongue was too sore.

Zhang Yu probed her daughter-in-law. Zhang Yu saw a sweaty flushed face and swollen lips. Zhang Yu was once a newlywed and understood what happened... Zhang Yu was going to look through the nursery catalogue online to prepare for the birth of her first grandchild.

Qin Song walked around the bathroom to cool down. After it was safe to pull his zipper up without causing another embarrassing injury, he managed to button up his pants. Then he went outside to find his escaped wife.

Han Ting Ting gulped down the rest of her glass of apple juice. She saw Qin Song came outside of the bathroom and immediately looked away.

Qin Song sat down on the sofa next to Han Ting Ting. She secretly glanced at him and turned away when she saw his sly smile. Her cooled body suddenly became hot again.

Qin Song felt Ting Ting's shoulder turned hot and deliberately turned to one of his parents' assistants. 'I want a glass of apple juice.'

'Oh? Song Song, when did you start drinking apple juice?' Zhang Yu asked.

Qin Song stared at his 'little country bun' who was avoiding eye contact with him. He licked his lips. He could still taste Ting Ting's sweetness mixed with apple juice. 'Just now.'

Qin Song couldn't drive whilst his arm was broken. A driver drove him to work and back home. Ting Ting didn't want to trouble the driver and walked twenty minutes to her preschool and back home. He couldn't stand the sight of her walking to work and back home.

On a beautiful day Qin Song returned home with a loveable coral pink electric bike. Ting Ting happily jumped onto her new bike and rode it around the living room. He came out of the kitchen with a glass of apple juice, didn't pay attention and bumped into both the bike and the bike's owner.

Han Ting Ting got off the bike and wiped the apple juice off Qin Song's face.

‘Song Song, I’m sorry.’

‘Your bike riding skills are poor too. I’ll worry about you all day if I let you drive the bike. I want you to practice driving a car with me,’ Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting smiled sweetly at Qin Song. ‘I’ll be careful.’

Qin Song opened his dry eyes and saw Ting Ting lifted her left hand up.

‘I promise!’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song thought ‘little country bun’s’ serious expression was too adorable. He laughed and pinched her cheek. Ting Ting being sulky with him put him in a good mood.

Unfortunately, Qin Song’s good mood was soured. Ting Ting’s promise was not reliable!

On a rare Friday afternoon Qin Song finish work early and went to Ting Ting’s preschool and waited to go home with her. The electric bike was wide but too short. He sat behind her and didn’t have enough leg room. He wrapped his legs around her legs and wrapped his right arm around her waist. He rested his body against her soft back.

‘Song Song! We’re on a public road,’ Han Ting Ting protested.

‘What?’ Qin Song asked innocently.

‘Remove your wandering hand or someone will see us,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song rubbed his face against her soft back, smiled and let his hand wander freely under her shirt. ‘I’m not going to. What are you going to do to stop me?’

‘I’ll push you off the bike,’ Han Ting Ting said.

‘You wouldn’t dare,’ Qin Song said.

Suddenly the electric bike’s emergency brake was triggered. Both Qin Song and Ting Ting jerked forward. He held her waist and pulled them up. But the bike’s back wheel jammed his foot.

‘Han Ting Ting! Do you want to be a widow?’

Han Ting Ting was speechless and too shocked to move.

Qin Song was surprised his 'little country bun' didn't move. Ting Ting kept staring at the Mercedes 350 parked in front of their house. A tall and broad man leaned against the front of the car. The man wore a grey shirt and black gloves. The man lifted a lighter in a fluid motion, lit a cigarette and closed the lighter. The man inhaled and puffed out a ring of smoke. The manly aura around the man was impossible to deny. Finally the man spotted them, laughed comfortably and strode toward them. A breeze passed by and the man's jacket fluttered. Qin Song was startled because it was the life version of 'the wind blowing and jacket fluttering' image Ting Ting described to him long ago.

Qin Song's good mood was soured by the appearance of his wife's 'that person.'

Chen Yi Feng stood in front of them and Han Ting Ting's whole body tensed. Chen Yi Feng didn't approach Han Ting Ting first. Chen Yi Feng punched the man standing behind Han Ting Ting and laughed. 'Little Qin Song, long time no see.'

Qin Song received Chen Yi Feng's solid punch. On the inside Qin Song was deeply disturbed but remained calm on the outside despite the bleeding cut on his lip. He laughed coldly. 'Long time no see, Mr Chen!'

Chen Yi Feng laughed comfortably. After he greeted Qin Song, he turned to Han Ting Ting who was held tightly by Qin Song. He rubbed her head and the tone of his voice was gentle. 'Ting Bao!'

Ting Ting lowered her head. 'Um.' Her voice trembled in a way Qin Song never heard before.

Chen Yi Feng pinched Han Ting Ting's nose. 'I dragged my old body thousands of miles to see you and you blow me off.'

'I didn't,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting lifted her head and saw Chen Yi Feng's familiar smile that stabbed through her heart. Her eyes stung and she was on the verge of tears.

'Long time no see, it's clearly him!' Han Ting Ting's stabbed heart said.

‘Honey, invite the guest into our home,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song pulled Ting Ting into his chest and she nodded.

‘No need. I want to talk with Ting Ting for a while then I’ll leave. Tomorrow I’ll discuss business with you at Qin’s company,’ Chen Yi Feng said.

Han Ting Ting didn’t know what business connection Song Song and Chen Yi Feng have, but Chen Yi Feng rejecting Song Song’s hospitality wasn’t good. Her first thought was that it made Song Song unhappy.

‘Since you’re here already, you might as well come inside,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Chen Yi Feng heard Han Ting Ting’s invite and nodded. ‘Ok.’

‘Make yourself at home,’ Qin Song said. He hugged Ting Ting. ‘Honey, should we go out to dinner tonight?’

Chen Yi Feng didn’t wait for Han Ting Ting’s answer. He shook his head. ‘Don’t trouble yourselves. Tonight I have dinner plans.’

‘I understand,’ Qin Song said. He rubbed Ting Ting’s arm. ‘But before you go at least share a small meal with us. Ting Ting told me a lot about the two of you being close neighbourhood friends.’

Chen Yi Feng pretended he couldn’t see Qin Song provoking him. He smiled at Han Ting Ting. ‘I often trouble Ting Ting to look after Dong Dong.’

‘No trouble,’ Qin Song said. ‘My wife loves children. Honey...’

Song Song in front of Chen Yi Feng threw ‘my wife’ and ‘honey’ in every sentence. Han Ting Ting wasn’t blind. She knew Song Song did it on purpose to provoke Chen Yi Feng. The more she heard it the more it got on her nerves. ‘Song Song, go upstairs and change.’

‘Um. I’ll head upstairs. You two go ahead and talk,’ Qin Song said and gritted his teeth.

Chen Yi Feng took off his jacket and Han Ting Ting reflexively grabbed his jacket and draped it over the sofa. Then he sat down on the sofa.

‘It’s a lovely home,’ Chen Yi Feng praised.

Chen Yi Feng felt the combined effect of Qin Song's sense of style and Han Ting Ting's homeliness aura made the house seem lively and warm.

'Do you want a cup of coffee? I don't have the tea brand that you like to drink,' Han Ting Ting said.

'I'm not thirsty. Come sit. I have a lot of questions!' Chen Yi Feng said.

Han Ting Ting sat at a distance to Chen Yi Feng on the sofa.

'Ting Ting, tell me the truth. Is it because you're happily married that you don't think it's appropriate to contact me? Or is it because Qin Song hasn't been treating you well and you don't want me to know about your bad marriage so I won't worry about you?' Chen Yi Feng asked.

'None of those reasons,' Han Ting Ting said.

'Then why do you only take calls from Dong Dong's school but don't bother picking up my calls?' Chen Yi Feng asked.

It was nearly winter but Han Ting Ting's back was sweating. 'I... recently a lot of things have happened. I've been busy... I haven't had free time.'

'Because of what's happening with the Qin's household?' Chen Yi Feng asked.

'That's part of the reason,' Han Ting Ting said.

'Not another reason, like you don't want to talk to me?' Chen Yi Feng asked teasingly.

Han Ting Ting betrayed her conscience and nodded.

'That's good!' Chen Yi Feng said and leaned back on the sofa.

A moment later Chen Yi Feng stood up and took out a colourful envelope. He gave the letter to Han Ting Ting. 'Dong Dong gave me an order. She said when I see you I have to hand deliver it to you.'

Han Ting Ting accepted the colourful envelope.

Chen Yi Feng sat back down and reached out to rub Han Ting Ting's head. 'Recently there've been a lot of things going on with the Qin household. It's messy business, I came here because of that reason. You need to be careful during this unstable period. Don't get involved in their power struggle and

inheritance entitlements, it's too dangerous.'

Han Ting Ting didn't bother to disagree with Chen Yi Feng. She was married to Song Song, of course she was involved. Song Song had always protected her, he'd never put her life in danger.

'Ok, my business here is done. Qin Song is a good person. But if he ever does anything to hurt you, tell me straight away. Even if the distance between us is far, I have many ways to make him pay for hurting you,' Chen Yi Feng said and smiled gently.

Han Ting Ting felt the more they talked the more her heart felt calm. As if Chen Yi Feng was nothing more than an old friend from her past. Finally she was able to smile back at him.

Qin Song never changed clothes as fast as he did upstairs. He strode to sofa to separate Ting Ting and Chen Yi Feng. He sat between them and pulled Ting Ting close to him. 'Ahem.'

'Song Song, your collar's all crooked,' Han Ting Ting gently scolded.

Ting Ting gently lifted Qin Song's chin and fixed his collar. He happily let her fuss over him. He glanced over at Chen Yi Feng and saw Chen Yi Feng awkwardly admiring the furnishings in the living room.

'Go find yourself another step-mum for your daughter. Ting Ting's my wife,' Qin Song's heart telepathically said to the manly Chen Yi Feng.

Chen Yi Feng didn't stay long before he excused himself. Han Ting Ting and Qin Song escorted him to the front door. When he was changing his shoes he noticed Putt Putt on top of the shoe rack.

Yesterday Xiao Tao came over to play. Xiao Tao liked to play with Putt Putt and must have forgotten to put Putt Putt back in her room. Han Ting Ting panicked. She hoped Chen Yi Feng didn't notice Putt Putt. Song Song already disliked Putt Putt. If Song Song found out Chen Yi Feng was the one who gave her Putt Putt, Song Song would be angry and use it as an excuse to get rid of Putt Putt.

'Putt Putt is old and worn out. Why haven't you thrown Putt Putt away?' Chen Yi Feng said and deliberately smiled smugly at Qin Song.

Han Ting Ting glanced over at Song Song and saw his good mood was gone and felt worried. Chen Yi Feng chose that moment to farewell them.

After Chen Yi Feng left, Song Song locked himself in his room upstairs. Han Ting Ting called him to eat dinner but he stayed inside his room.

End of Chapter 8 (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Eight (Part 2)

In the middle of the night Han Ting Ting rolled around her bed but couldn't sleep. She went into the kitchen to grab a cup of water then went into the living room to read Dong Dong's letter written to her.

Dong Dong and Han Ting Ting used to be close. The letter was long and Dong Dong talked about secrets that could only be shared between girls. At the end of the letter was always the same sentence – 'In my heart you are my mum.'

Han Ting Ting's eyes were slightly teary. If she read the letter a year ago she'd be sobbing. But in that moment the past seemed long ago in a faraway place.

Suddenly Han Ting Ting felt there was something strange that stood behind her back. She turned around and it was a dark figure and she yelled out. 'Song Song! You scared me to death!'

'If you didn't have anything to hide then you wouldn't have been scared!' Qin Song said coldly. 'Chen Yi Feng's daughter sees you as her step-mum already, congratulations!'

Han Ting Ting put the letter away. 'Why did you read my letter?'

Qin Song pursed his lips. 'I'm hungry!'

Han Ting Ting went into the kitchen and half an hour later she made a bowl of beef noodles for Song Song. He ate a few mouthfuls and looked up to look at her up and down coldly. It made her uncomfortable so she went to her bedroom to hide.

Inside Han Ting Ting's room she found Putt Putt and Dong Dong's letter were both missing. She went back into the kitchen to confront the prime thief suspect.

'Song Song!' Han Ting Ting said and put out her hand. 'Give them to me!'

Qin Song leisurely finish his bowl of beef noodles then put the bowl onto the table. 'I threw them out.'

‘Why did you do that?’ Han Ting Ting asked.

‘What are you going to do?’ Qin Song asked. ‘You’re living under my roof and you keep your love tokens from your old love. Do you think I’m that easy to bully?’

Han Ting Ting’s eyes stung full of bottled tears of disappointment. How could Song Song be that cruel to her?

‘Where are you going?’ Qin Song asked.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting running away, he stood up and chased after her.

‘Back to my room to sleep!’ Han Ting Ting said and did her best to hold her tears back. ‘Tomorrow I’m going home. I’m not going to live in your house anymore!’

‘Don’t think that I’ll let you leave!’ Qin Song said. He grabbed hold of Han Ting Ting’s shoulders. ‘Don’t think just because he’s Chen Yi Feng that I’ll be scared of him. Han Ting Ting I’m letting you know I’m never divorcing you! I’ll never let you go to be with him! It doesn’t matter if he’s Chen Yi Feng. Don’t even dream about leaving me!’

When Song Song really lost his temper he was completely unreasonable. Han Ting Ting was both disappointed and heartbroken over him. The tears she saved for her room suddenly burst out in front of him.

Ting Ting’s silent tears startled Qin Song. He slowly loosened his hold on her. A while later he released her, he stared at the sadness in her eyes then turned away and went upstairs.

Han Ting Ting returned to her room but stayed awake all night.

The following morning Han Ting Ting woke up earlier than usual. She washed her face, brushed her teeth then went to make breakfast. In the kitchen she saw the empty bowl of beef noodles from last night and it made her remember what happened. It was the most depressing start of a day she experienced.

Han Ting Ting wasn’t in the mood to cook in the kitchen that made her sad. Instead she went into the living room to clean. She saw Putt Putt on the coffee

table in front of the sofa. She ran to pick up Putt Putt and hugged her Putt Putt. A letter was left behind on the coffee table. It was Dong Dong's letter.

Song Song misunderstood why she kept Putt Putt.

Han Ting Ting saw Putt Putt as a childhood friend. It didn't matter if everyone around her misunderstood her. She could tell Putt Putt anything and Putt Putt never laughed at her. It had nothing to do with Chen Yi Feng. Putt Putt wasn't a love token, Putt Putt was a friend for her to confide to over the years.

Han Ting Ting picked up Dong Dong's letter. Sunlight streamed into a room and she saw something sparkle beneath the sofa. She reached under the sofa and took out a ring.

A ring... a ring! Han Ting Ting had a light bulb moment. She remembered when Song Song was performing the magic trick she saw the same sparkle coming from his hands. He kept mumbling something about a magic prop. She asked him what he lost so she could help him find it. But he adamantly refused to tell her. The magic prop was... a ring?

The magic trick Song Song wanted to show Han Ting Ting, broke his arm to show her that night... a ring for her?

'Ahem...' Qin Song coughed.

Qin Song walked downstairs in his pyjamas. He saw Ting Ting standing silently in the living room. He was beyond happy to see her still home. He pretended to get a glass of water in the kitchen.

Han Ting Ting followed Qin Song into the kitchen.

'Did you see them yet?' Qin Song said coldly. He put his glass of water on the table. 'I didn't throw those raggy things out! Did you see the way you over reacted last night?'

Han Ting Ting listened to him quietly.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting looking at him strangely and felt awkward. 'What?'

'Last night... I'm sorry. I shouldn't have been so sensitive. Song Song, it doesn't matter who gave Putt Putt to me. Putt Putt has been with me for more than ten years. Putt Putt is important to me. Thank you for returning Putt Putt to me,'

Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song wasn't happy to hear Putt Putt was important to Ting Ting. But last night she said – 'I'm not going to live in your house anymore,' he was worried all night and didn't sleep. He didn't expect to receive an apology from her early in the morning and was quick to accept it before she changed her mind. 'I forgive you.'

Qin Song didn't know why Ting Ting was smiling and took out her left hand that she was hiding behind her back. She opened her palm. 'Your magic prop, I found it.'

Qin Song saw the ring he got for Ting Ting and was surprised then he pursed his lips. 'If you found it then keep it. It was yours all along.'

'Why did you get me a ring?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Your wedding ring was chosen by my assistant. I wanted you to wear a ring I chose myself,' Qin Song said.

'Do you like the ring I chose?' Qin Song asked.

Han Ting Ting nodded her head.

A few hours ago Qin Song's heart broke because he thought Ting Ting didn't have any room in her heart for him. But he saw her nodded that she liked the ring and her blushing made his heart whole again and filled with joy.

Qin Song was too scared to ask, did it mean Ting Ting liked him?

'Last night I regretted those hurtful things I said to you. Whatever I said to you out of anger is not true,' Qin Song said. Then he remembered the things that were true whilst he was angry. 'Um, except I'm never divorcing you was true! One thousand times a thousand true!'

Song Song took the ring from Han Ting Ting and his shaky fingers put the ring through her ring finger above her wedding ring. He interlocked their fingers. He held her hand tight enough for her to feel pain but she didn't struggle. She looked up at him lovingly.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting's misty eyes and pulled her into his chest.

'Have you forgiven me?' Qin Song whispered.

‘Um,’ Han Ting Ting said.

‘Do you like me?’ Qin Song said softer than a whisper.

Ting Ting didn’t answer Qin Song. He held onto her shoulders and pulled her back a little bit. ‘Quickly tell me.’

Song Song held her tight and wouldn’t let her go. She knew she had to let go of her embarrassment. ‘I... like you.’

‘Do you mean it?’ Qin Song asked.

Han Ting Ting saw Song Song’s cheeks were pink, bit her lips and nodded her head.

Qin Song coughed and let go of Ting Ting.

‘I’ll go make breakfast,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song pulled Ting Ting back into his chest. He didn’t know where to start except that he wanted to hug her tight.

The scent of Ting Ting’s hair made Qin Song’s throat dry. ‘That day at the hospital I wasn’t drunk. I meant what I said. I want to us to be together. In the past I had a lot of girlfriends. I even thought I loved a few of them... but that was before I met you. After I met you I realised I never loved any of them in the past. You’re not like them at all, you’re different to them. I feel safe when you’re next to me. There’s never been anyone like you, you never did anything for me to hate you. You might think what I’m about to tell you is something easy to do. But for me that’s something hard to do. I’ve never met anyone like you that made me want to be with you for twenty-four hours.’

End of Chapter Eight (Part 2)

Related

part 3

Chapter Eight (Part 3 of 3)

Han Ting Ting felt light headed. She heard each word Song Song whispered into her ear. The sweetness flew around her heart.

Han Ting Ting asked her heart if that feeling of being loved could make her fly on top of clouds.

‘Say something,’ Qin Song said. Her silence made him scared she didn’t want to accept his feelings. ‘Are you secretly laughing at me?’

‘I’m not laughing at you,’ Han Ting Ting said then ended up laughing.

If Song Song didn’t say anything whilst Han Ting Ting was secretly overjoyed then she wouldn’t have let out her joyful laugh she held in.

‘You are laughing!’ Qin Song said and playfully chased Ting Ting around the living room.

Qin Song and Ting Ting ran around the living room until they were both breathless. Then they sat on the sofa. He pulled her body to lean on his chest and his head gently rested on her head.

‘Why didn’t you tell me ‘that person’ was Chen Yi Feng?’ Qin Song asked.

‘I didn’t know you knew him,’ Han Ting Ting said. She felt the world was too small. ‘Do you have business connections with him?’

‘His company is influential in the southern districts. In the past I cooperated with him for two separate business transactions. Ji Nan said that my traitorous uncles invited him to join hands with them against me,’ Qin Song said. ‘Chen Yi Feng is complicating things for me. I can’t underestimate him. Big boss even has to ask Chen Yu Bai to keep an eye on who Chen Yi Feng has business deals with. But I’m not scared of Chen Yi Feng!’

Qin Song was upset Ting Ting kept quiet. ‘You don’t believe me?’

‘I believe you. It’s just that the Chen Yi Feng you described and the Chen Yi Feng I knew in the past sound like two different people. I think it’s because he

rarely talked about his work with me in the past,' Han Ting Ting said. 'I think I was sheltered back then and I didn't objectively see all sides of him.'

'What's so good about him?' Qin Song said. 'Your eyesight back then was poor. If you were going to secretly love someone, you should have chosen to love someone of my calibre! He's an ordinary man and old too!'

'You...' Han Ting Ting said and sighed at Song Song's childish insults.

Qin Song pulled Ting Ting back so he could see her expression. 'Your dad has good eyesight! Your dad could see straight away that Chen Yi Feng was nothing but a nuisance for you.'

'He didn't toy with me... it was me who was the nuisance,' Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song laughed. 'You didn't even confess to him. How could your feelings back then burden him?'

'I didn't dare confess to him,' Han Ting Ting said. 'Then Tu Tu persuaded me to write a confession letter to him. My dad found it before I could give it to him. Dad was furious and asked me what did Chen Yi Feng do to me to make me have feelings for him. Dad wanted to confront Chen Yi Feng if he was leading me on or did anything despicable to me. I cried and begged dad to not go see him, mum helped to persuade dad not to go too. At that time dad received an opportunity for a work transfer. Dad didn't hesitate to accept and we all moved here.'

Han Ting Ting thought that was the most rebellious period of her life. She was always obedient and was scared to do anything to defy her parents. Because of her foolish one sided love, she uprooted her parents' stable life. She felt lighter after confessing her deepest regret to Song Song. She had bottled that up for so long. She leaned into Song Song's warm chest that gave her more courage to let it all out.

'It made me depressed that I caused my parents who are older now to move away from all their familiar surroundings and lifetime friends. Then after we moved here, dad's work was more dangerous and he broke a leg. I felt I let my parents down and caused them to suffer because of me,' Han Ting Ting said softly.

Qin Song hugged Ting Ting tight. 'You regret coming here? There's nothing

here that makes you happy?’

‘It’s not all bad... coming here... I got to meet you,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song felt good hearing his ‘little country bun’ stating the obvious, of course meeting him was the best blessing in her life! He buried his face on the curve of Ting Ting’s neck and rubbed his chin along her shoulder.

Qin Song could only show his true childish nature and vulnerabilities in front of his ‘little country bun.’ Whilst at Qin’s company, it was exhausting to put up a cold front to deal with his greedy flesh eating uncles.

Qin’s company was a family owned business. Qin Song’s dad was the major stakeholder and Qin Song was the legitimate successor of Qin’s company. It was a lot of pressure for him to make profitable business decisions otherwise it would give his uncles ammunition to openly oppose him being the head of Qin’s company.

What was scary was that Qin Song knew that Chen Yi Feng was a different breed from his transparent uncles. Chen Yi Feng, that wolf in sheep clothing! Chen Yi Feng knew all the right things to say to his uncles to befriend them and at the same time not to fully commit to his uncles’ side. Chen Yi Feng was too cunning! Chen Yi Feng kept his options opened and would wait until the dust settled and swoop in without offending anyone!

‘Song Song!’ Qin Song’s third uncle called and knocked on the meeting table. ‘We’re in the middle of a meeting and you’re in a daze. How can I feel assured to leave Qin’s company in your hands?’

Qin Song gave his third uncle a dirty look. ‘I heard you. You should have presented the business proposal to me first before you approached Chen Yi Feng. I need to know if the terms and conditions will be beneficial for our end.’ He swept a cold look over his other uncles. ‘Who’s next?’

Qin Song’s indifference demeanour made it hard for his uncles to know how Qin Song’s brain worked. They wanted to find out what his weaknesses were and use it to stab him in the back. Whilst his uncles mull over how to take Qin Song down from his pedestal, Qin Song was busy planning his attack to deal with that

eye sore Chen Yi Feng.

The information gathered by Ji Nan regarding Chen Yi Feng arriving to their district and his involvement with Qin Song's uncles disturbed Chen Yu Bai.

Qin Song recalled what Chen Yu Bai said to the Liang's sworn brothers. 'Based on our business relationship with Chen Yi Feng over the years, it's not ethical of him to help Qin Song's uncles to attack Qin Song. Yet Chen Yi Feng didn't turn Qin Song's uncles' invitation down and didn't let us know his intentions before arriving to our district. What is Chen Yi Feng's real agenda?'

Qin Song felt the same way Chen Yu Bai felt. But Chen Yi Feng wasn't a fool. Chen Yi Feng wouldn't risk breaking relations with Liang's company that had contributed substantial profits to Chen Yi Feng's company in order to attack Qin Song.

Unfortunately for Qin Song, no matter what speculations he came up with it never occurred to him that Chen Yi Feng was scheming to turn Qin Song's 'little country bun' into Dong Dong's step-mum.

Qin Song stepped out of the meeting room and bypassed Chen Yi Feng who huddled with his uncles conspiring against him. Qin Song acted like he wasn't affected but inside he was worried he couldn't outwit them.

Qin Song was frustrated he had to deal on a business and a personal level with that hateful Chen Yi Feng.

Qin Song arrived home, took off his shoes and entered a freezing house. 'Where's my wife? Honey!'

Han Ting Ting poked her head out from the kitchen. 'What?'

'Why didn't you turn on the heater?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song had a long work day. He didn't expect to come home to be chilled and it made his mood cold too.

'It's not the coldest part of the day. Our house is too big. Putting on the heater all day is wasteful,' Han Ting Ting said.

'Are you planning to freeze your husband to death?' Qin Song asked.

Han Ting Ting sighed. Song Song wasn't in a good mood. She turned on the heater and put his shoes he tossed on the ground on the shoe rack. 'Do you really think I want you to freeze to death?'

Song Song walked away. Han Ting Ting pulled him back. 'Why aren't you saying anything? You were mean to me before.'

'You provoked me first. Who do you know that doesn't turn on the heater in winter? I've asked you many times to turn the heater on at home. But each time I get home it's freezing inside,' Qin Song explained gently.

'Ok. I promise before you get home I'll toast the house for you,' Han Ting Ting said. 'Back in my parents' old home, winter was colder than the winter here. But we never once had the need to use a heater. There's four seasons in a year. But you always keep the house the same temperature all year round. And you wear thin clothing all year round too. Don't you think you're the strange one?'

'Can you not reason with me the way you would with those little kids in your class?' Qin Song mumbled.

Han Ting Ting couldn't hold back her urge and pinched Song Song's cheek. 'Will you ever grow up? You're such a kid.'

Qin Song thought Ting Ting's palm was warm. All the tension in his body melted away. He held her hand tight and wanted to turn her into his personal heater.

'Stop fooling around,' Han Ting Ting said. 'I need to cook dinner. Tonight I'll make chicken soup for you. Go upstairs and change. I bought you a thick jacket and hung it in your closet.'

'You bought me a jacket?' Qin Song asked.

The temperamental Qin Song who was angry a moment ago was turned to marshmallow after finding out his wife didn't want to freeze him to death.

Han Ting Ting shyly nodded. 'When I was organising your closet I saw you didn't have any thick jackets. So I bought you one to keep you warm. Go upstairs and see if it fits. If you don't like it then I'll give it to my dad to wear.'

'I'll love it!' Qin Song said and flew up the stairs.

The following day at Liang's company...

Big boss pulled the collar of his jacket together and called his secretary. 'Is the heater broken?'

'The heater... Mr Qin junior requested for the heater to be turned off,' the secretary said.

'Why?' Big boss asked.

Big boss sighed. He suspected who the culprit was and his suspicion was verified. That little Qin Song... after getting married he was more childish by the day!

'Everyone else asked Mr Qin junior the same question. He said that he wanted to conserve energy for the good of the company and the environment,' the secretary said.

'Um, I understand,' Big boss said and turned off the intercom.

At the Liang's company meeting room five of the six handsome Liang's sworn brothers' noses turned pink from the cold, their faces were stiff and their teeth chattered.

Li Wei Ran turned his wooden head toward Rong Yan. 'Rong Yan. Take a pick from my car collection. You can have any car you want as long as you promise not to teach another trick to our love struck little Qin Song.'

The former player Rong Yan could barely lift his eyelashes. 'Don't blame me. I wasn't involved on this occasion.'

Big boss' shaky index finger gently tapped dance on the meeting table. 'Third brother, what's your take on the situation?'

Chen Yu Bai was quietly looking over documents whilst his other sworn brothers discussed the strange behaviour of their childish sixth brother Qin Song.

Ji Nan sneezed. 'Third brother, why are you in such a rush to finish work?'

'I'm looking over the business proposal for Qin Song,' Chen Yu Bai said and

pushed the bridge of his glasses up his red nose. 'I want to get it done to kick little Qin Song back to Qin's company before the winter's peak cold is here!'

The remaining four sworn brothers clapped their stiff hands together to applaud their third sworn brother's quick thinking.

Qin Song the heater killer entered happily into the meeting room. He wore his new thick black down jacket his wife bought him over a black woollen vest and a coral pink collar shirt.

The swish-swoosh sounds from Qin Song's unzipped down jacket as he strode to his chair gave his sworn brothers goose bumps.

'What's the brand of your new down jacket?' Rong Yan asked and rubbed his stiff chin.

Qin Song ignored Rong Yan's curiosity and sat down in a dignified manner. No matter how Qin Song sat, Ji Nan thought that his down jacket looked like a spread parachute. It pained her eyes. She closed her eyes and asked herself if the Qin Song in front of her was the Qin Song who competed with her over who was the most handsome sworn brother back when she was disguised as a man.

Fortunately that winter employees at Liang's company was able to withstand a cold winter with the heater on after Qin Sang called Han Ting Ting and 'in passing' discussed how Li Wei Ran caught a cold. Then Li Wei Ran spread his cold to the other Liang's sworn brothers who didn't own a down jacket. Afterward the conversation flowed smoothly over the topic of the heating situation at Liang's company.

After a light bulb moment Han Ting Ting understood Qin Sang's implied meaning over the butterfly effect of one person's action. That one person happened to be the wife of the childish Qin Song, Han Ting Ting. Han Ting Ting thought if she didn't buy Qin Song the black down jacket then Qin Sang's husband wouldn't have caught a cold and passed it on to the others who didn't own a down jacket.

That night when Qin Song got home the house was toasty warm like it never was before.

The cursed black down jacket was secretly given to Ting's dad.

End of Chapter Eight (Part 3 of 3)

Related

part 1

Chapter Nine (Part 1)

It was circulated that Chen Yi Feng was interested in finding a new investment. The seniors at Qin's company took advantage of the situation and did everything in their power to create relations with Chen Yi Feng.

The rumors were that Chen Yi Feng signed a contract with Qin Song's uncles, openly declared Chen Yi Feng opposed Liang's company to help topple Qin Song's unstable position as the head of Qin's company. As part of the contract Chen Yi Feng became a stakeholder of Qin's company.

At the start most of Qin's company stakeholders were intimidated by Qin Yun and Liang's company influence in the market. But after hearing of Chen Yi Feng opposing Qin Song, those stakeholders withdrew their support for Qin Song to be Qin Yun's successor.

Qin Song at Qin's company was scrambling to keep supporters on his side.

Qin Song never voiced his work struggles with Han Ting Ting. But Han Ting Ting noticed that he'd been home late nearly every night and always came home with a tired look and she knew that something was wrong at Qin's company.

'Ting Ting... Ting Ting?' Qin Yun called his dazed daughter-in-law.

'Sorry, dad. What did you say?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Ting Ting, I asked if you and Qin Song wanted to spend Christmas with us at Commander Zhang's mansion?' Qin Yun said. 'Having everyone there will be lively. Then for New Year, you and Qin Song can spend it at your parents' home.'

'Is that possible?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Of course. It's your first Christmas as newlyweds, it would be good to join as on the festivities at Commander Zhang's mansion. Straight after Christmas you and Song Song can head to your parents,' Qin Yun said.

Han Ting Ting was excited at the prospect at having a lively Christmas. But she

remembered Song Song's tired state and hesitated. 'Ah, I'll need to discuss it with Song Song first.'

'Song Song will definitely agree. Song Song hates spending New Year with my side of the family,' Qin Yun said.

'Why's that?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Han Ting Ting loved spending New Year with her dad's side of the family.

'Song Song never liked his uncles. They put too much pressure on him. Song Song rather work for Liang's company than be the head of Qin's company. Huh, now he knows he made a bad judgement. If he listened to me while I was healthy and spent more time with his uncles' families then he wouldn't be ostracized by his uncles at Qin's company,' Qin Yun gently explained.

'Dad, why aren't you stepping in to help Song Song?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Han Ting Ting wanted to ask that question to Qin Yun long ago. She admired Qin Yun who ruled with an iron fist at Qin's company for many decades. But couldn't understand why Qin Yun would standby and do nothing to help Song Song when Song Song needed help.

'Dad, or is it you want Song Song to learn a lesson before you help him?' Han Ting Ting asked after deep thought.

Qin Yun shook his head. 'Two months ago I had that exact thought. But now... it's too late.' His wife wasn't here and it was only his daughter-in-law with him. Finally he was able to confide his true feelings about his son. 'Ting Ting, I only have one son. I wanted to pass on all my life experience to Song Song. I wanted to tell him every lesson, failure and success that I've collected over the years. I want to give everything I have to him. I want him to surpass the expectations of those who doubted him... but it's too late, I don't have much time left. I can't hang on long enough to watch him slowly improve. The few months I have left, I need to see how he can cope on his own. I need to see what decisions he'll make to overcome obstacles. If he fails, it'd be ok, because I'm still here to show him why it didn't work and advise him what's the right course of action to take to achieve his goals. This is the most practical and also the last lesson I can give him.'

‘Dad! Dad don’t think like that... even though Song Song’s workload is busier by the day but he’s working hard to... he still reads research papers at night to find the best treatment and the best specialists to help you. He said nothing will happen to you... there’s nothing for you to worry about!’ Han Ting Ting said in a choked voice and her eyes stung.

‘I know,’ Qin Yun said and smiled gently. ‘But I can’t escape death. I can’t follow Song Song around his whole life. The person who’ll be by his side the rest of his life is you. You’re a good girl. Married to Song Song, it’s you that have made many sacrifices, in my heart I can see that clearly. But every parent is selfish when it comes to their own child, I’m deeply happy to see you by Song Song’s side. In the future... Song Song has to rely on you.’

Han Ting Ting left the hospital for a long time but she couldn’t stop crying.

Han Ting Ting didn’t interact often with Qin Yun. Usually Qin Yun is a serious person. Qin Yun treated her well and was gentler toward her than he was toward Song Song. But in her heart Qin Yun was the same type of person as her dad, someone she needed to always respect.

Han Ting Ting as an outsider could see the love Qin Yun reserved for Song Song. Qin Yun placed high expectations on Song Song. Qin Yun never stopped loving his only son. In Song Song’s life the people around him have loved him and spoiled him, Qin Yun was in that circle and Qin Yun reserved a special kind of love that no one else could offer Song Song.

It wasn’t that Qin Yun couldn’t help Song Song overcome obstacles... in the future Song Song would face more challenging obstacles. By that time Qin Yun wouldn’t be alive and exist in the world to follow Song Song and offer the support that Song Song needed.

Qin Yun was waiting to see the outcome of Song Song’s hard work, if at the critical moment Song Song couldn’t cope on his own, Qin Yun would advise Song Song what to do... Qin Yun wanted to be by the side of his precious son that he loved during the last few months left. Qin Yun wanted to see Song Song’s growth spurt, he wanted to see Song Song succeed. That way in the future when Song Song faced those unforeseen challenging obstacles... Song Song would look back

and remember the final months spent with Qin Yun and how Qin Yun used the final strength he possessed to love and support Song Song.

Han Ting Ting asked her heart if her dad loved her in that way too? That her dad stood at a corner that she couldn't see, to silently love and protect her. Like how Song Song always felt Qin Yun didn't love Song Song... in the past her dad's strict discipline style had hurt her deeply... but was that her dad's way of showing her the deep love he reserved for her?

The hospital was close to Han Ting Ting's parents' home. She was deep in painful thoughts and cried on the way to her parents' home. On a road not far from her parents' home something was flung in front of her face, a piercing scream was heard and suddenly she felt a dull ache on one of her cheeks.

Han Ting Ting woke up from her shock. It was a beer bottle that was flung onto the wall beside her. The shattered beer bottle deflected onto the left side of her face. She absentmindedly rubbed her left cheek. Then on her palm she saw blood.

Afterward countless beer bottles were thrown at Han Ting Ting. Some of it hit her body and some was smashed against the wall. She was shaken and it took a while for her to crouch down and tucked her head between her knees. She cried and screamed for help at the same time.

Whilst Han Ting Ting was attacked by beer bottles, Qin Song finished a meeting. He cursed his uncles along the way back to his office and kicked the coffee table that was in front of his work desk.

Afterward Qin Song didn't know why but he felt a sharp pain in his heart. The document he was amending wasn't hard but he kept writing then crossing out mistakes... he couldn't get rid of the feeling that something was wrong.

Qin Song felt frustrated he couldn't shake off the bad feeling and flung his pen. At that moment Chen Yi Feng stepped into his office and narrowly missed Qin Song's pen.

'Mr Qin junior, Mr Chen, he...' Qin Song's assistant rushed in to explain Chen Yi

Feng's sudden appearance.

'It's nothing, you can leave,' Qin Song said coldly.

Chen Yi Feng comfortably sat in front of Qin Song. 'Forgive me for intruding. My time is limited. I can't wait until you are free to see me. I had no choice but to resort barging into your office.'

'You've already forced your way here. Mr Chen get to the point, what do you want?' Qin Song asked.

'Little Qin Song, you're more grown up than you were in the past,' Chen Yi Feng said. 'When I cooperated with Liang's company, you didn't enjoy being around me. The first time you pushed the workload to Rong Yan and the second time you pushed it to Chen Yu Bai. We've never cooperated on a business transaction from start to end.'

Qin Song sat straight and kept eye contact with Chen Yi Feng.

'Stop evading,' Qin Song said. 'Chen Yi Feng, aren't you always finding an excuse to fight with me? Are you scared you can't beat me on a one on one fight? That's why you want to ambush me? Just fight with me directly that would be the manly thing to do.'

Chen Yi Feng lit a cigarette. 'Are you game for a fight?'

'Why wouldn't I be? I'm not going to rely on Liang's company backing. Take the first punch and I'll fight you one on one,' Qin Song said and leaned back on his chair. 'Who's going to be the winner and the loser is already clear. Whatever you're planning you won't be able to beat me. But I'm a generous person. I'll give you an opportunity to fight with me.'

Chen Yi Feng's rings of smoke were like daggers aimed at Qin Song.

'Also...' Qin Song said and reached for an ash tray to put in front of Chen Yi Feng. 'Can you put out your cigarette? My wife doesn't allow me to smoke. If I come home tonight and smell of smoke, I'll find it hard to explain to my wife.'

Chen Yi Feng stiffened. He put out his cigarette and there wasn't a trace of his usual smile.

Qin Song didn't get the chance to gloat about his minor victory when he

received a call from his sobbing mum-in-law. He heard a few words and his face paled. He stood and ran out of his office.

When Qin Song arrived at his in-laws' house, Ting Ting got back from the hospital. Inside the house he didn't see Ting Ting at the door and the sharp pain in his heart intensified. He saw his dad-in-law and panicked. 'Where's Ting Ting?'

Qin Song's dad-in-law's face was more solemn than usual. His dad-in-law pointed to Ting Ting's old room.

Qin Song's 'little country bun' sat in bed and was looking out the window.

Song Song strode into Han Ting Ting's room. She heard footsteps and turned around. She saw it was Song Song and teared up. He gathered her in his arms and she cried on his chest.

Qin Song hugged Ting Ting tight then he was able to breathe calmly. He lifted her chin and turned her head left to right. 'Where are you hurt?'

Han Ting Ting pointed at her left cheek. 'Here.'

Qin Song saw Ting Ting's left cheek had four shallow cuts. The beer bottles were thick and the broken glass didn't strike deep into her skin. After a few days the shallow cuts would heal as though it never existed. It was because her skin was thin that made her bleed a lot. Her tender skin was slightly black and yellow. She cried until her eyes were swollen.

Qin Song laughed out of joy. When he received the phone call he was scared to death that she suffered a serious injury.

Han Ting Ting heard Song Song laugh and she became more crestfallen. 'Is it that bad?'

Qin Song pretended to ponder for a long time. 'Um, but not bad enough to scare someone.'

Han Ting Ting pushed Song Song away from her. She sat up on the bed again and sobbed.

Qin Song sat close to 'little country bun.' But Ting Ting kept edging away from him until she was backed into a corner of a wall. She looked like a neglected pet. He brushed through her soft knotty hair and his heart relaxed.

He lifted her body onto his lap.

Ting Ting wanted to wipe her tears but Qin Song held her wrists. 'Be careful of your wound.'

Qin Song reached for a tissue and gently wiped her tears.

'I was teasing you. It's not that bad,' Qin Song confessed. 'It's a few little cuts. It's shallow. After a few days it'll heal and you won't see it at all. Your skin is a lot thinner than mine. If the cuts were transferred to my skin there wouldn't be any bleeding.'

Han Ting Ting laughed and cried at the same time for worrying about nothing.

'Ok, you've laughed now. You can't cry anymore,' Qin Song said.

Ting Ting nodded. Qin Song kissed her nose. 'It doesn't look bad at all. My Ting Bao is the prettiest. I love you the most.'

Han Ting Ting's face turned bright red. She leaned on Song Song's chest and wrapped her arms tight around his waist.

Qin Song never had such a sweet feeling flow through his heart like he felt in that moment Ting Ting leaned into his chest for comfort and held his waist with all her strength.

'Song Song,' Han Ting Ting said softly into his chest. 'Song Song, if my face was scarred, what would you do?'

'I'll book an appointment with the best plastic surgeon for you,' Qin Song said without hesitation. 'I promise you'll be more beautiful than before.'

'If the plastic surgeon can't perform on me and my face stayed scarred, will you still love me?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Um, it depends on the degree of the scarring. If I woke up each day and was shocked each time I saw you and wished I never woke up again... would you still expect me to force myself to love you?' Qin Song asked teasingly.

'Qin-Song!' Han Ting Ting called out. She wanted to cry. 'I knew it. You only love beautiful things. One moment you lied to me and said I was the prettiest. The next moment you tell me you'll take me to get plastic surgery and make me more beautiful than now. You're full of contradictions. Your words are all lies!'

‘Oh, please. If I only loved what’s on the outside then how could I love you?’ Qin Song said in an as a matter-of-fact way.

‘You!’ Han Ting Ting said.

Ting Ting turned to pick up her pillow. She used the pillow to hit Qin Song. He played along with her and pretended to groan in pain. When there was an opening, he hugged ‘little country bun.’

‘Hey,’ Qin Song said. ‘Why are you unreasonable? I said I promised the plastic surgery would be successful to make you more beautiful so you wouldn’t feel anxious the plastic surgery would make your scars worse. As for you being the prettiest... my wife in my eyes of course is the prettiest!’

In Qin Song’s life, there’ve been girls who were more beautiful than Ting Ting. But in his heart, Ting Ting would always be the prettiest!

Han Ting Ting put her pillow down. She built enough courage then she held Song Song’s shoulders. ‘Me too.’

‘That’s because I’m naturally handsome,’ Qin Song said and laughed.

Qin Song bent his head down and stared at ‘little country bun.’ It was the first time that both of them stared lovingly into each other’s eyes without a trace of embarrassment.

End of Chapter Nine (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Nine (Part 2 of 2)

Inside Han Ting Ting's old room, it was filled with an aura of a fresh spring day. Outside the window it was raining heavily. Suddenly a crash was heard followed by Ting's mum's crying.

Qin Song pulled Ting Ting back onto his lap. 'Stay here and rest. I'll go outside and see what happened.'

Qin Song tucked Ting Ting under the bed sheet. Then he went outside and knocked on his in-laws' bedroom door. 'Dad? Mum?'

Qin Song didn't hear anything from their bedroom.

A moment later Ting's mum opened the door. She wiped her eyes and smiled sweetly. 'Song Song... you're here.'

'Um. Mum, what happened?' Qin Song asked.

Ting's mum cried silently. 'Go take Ting Ting away! In the future don't let Ting Ting come here anymore! Stay far away from this house...'

Ting's dad stepped out of the room and pulled Ting's mum back. He looked vulnerable and worn out unlike his usual stern image. 'Don't cry anymore. How can you cry in front of the kids?'

'My daughter was almost killed because of you!' Ting's mum yelled and pushed Ting's dad away.

Qin Song was speechless. His in-laws were usually a stable couple. One was stern and rarely spoke and the other one was gentle and sweet. Qin Song never heard Ting's mum raised her voice at Ting's dad.

'Ting Ting is ok. She's just frightened at the moment. In the future I promise I'll take better care of Ting Ting. Mum, don't worry too much,' Qin Song consoled.

Ting's mum shook her head. 'How can you promise easily? For the past month each time I step outside the house there's some new incident. Those crooks weren't stop causing trouble. How can we predict what those crooks are capable

of?’

‘I’ll manage it properly. Give me a little more time. I’ll definitely find a safe solution,’ Ting’s dad said.

‘Officer Han, I’ve heard your empty promises for half of my life! You haven’t changed, you always choose the hardest road to take. If you close a hard case you don’t care if someone else takes the credit for your hard work. I can’t believe at your age you chose to transfer to a department that gives you more dangerous duties,’ Ting’s mum said. Those words came from the bottom of her heart. Out of love she’d never thrown her husband’s past choices back at him before. ‘I’ve been with you nearly my whole life. Look at your colleagues’ wives. When I was young could you say that my looks and intelligence wasn’t on par with their wives?’

Ting’s dad was speechless. Ting’s mum took a deep breath. ‘No, you couldn’t. Then why is it that their wives are living a peaceful life and more youthful looking than me by decades when we’re the same age? Officer Han, I chose to marry you and never regretted it. It hurts me to see you injured at work so I encourage you to find a safer role. But you won’t listen to me and I don’t force the matter. Sometimes it feels like you love your work more than you love me. You don’t want to get your hands dirty like your colleagues. You’re the heroic Officer Han and I’m nothing but your servant that’s meant to worship your heroic deeds. But that’s me. That’s the consequence of my choices. What I can’t forgive is that your love for your work put my daughter’s life at risk! My Ting Bao is gentle and loving. How can you let her take the fall for you? Because of you today those crooks took their vendetta against you out on my daughter! My daughter is in her room scared witless. Are you proud of yourself Officer Han?’

‘You don’t need to say anything else!’ Ting’s dad boomed.

Qin Song was startled and Ting’s mum cried loudly.

Ting’s dad’s outburst caused the veins on his forehead pop out. He panted back and forth and his eyes were bloodshot red. Then he grabbed his jacket and went outside.

‘Where is dad going? Mum, do you want me to chase after dad?’ Qin Song asked.

‘Forget it,’ Ting’s mum said. ‘He’s not going far. He’s headed to the shops to buy a packet of cigarettes.’

Qin Song wasn’t used to his mum-in-law’s authoritative tone, it gave him a cold sweat. His mum-in-law was more intimidating than his dad-in-law when she wanted to be.

After Ting’s dad left, Ting’s mum’s temper calmed down. Qin Song quietly listen to Ting’s mum talk about the hard case Ting’s dad took on and why it led to Ting Ting being assaulted.

Ting’s mum wasn’t happy about how Ting’s dad’s colleagues demean him and took credit for his work. She admired Ting’s dad’s dedication to keeping the public safe but she didn’t like watching him suffer one injury after the next. Ting’s dad scoffed at promotions and pay rises. It was enough for him to feel fulfilled protecting others each day.

Ting’s mum told Qin Song about Ting Ting’s grandpa secretly asked Commander Zhang to look out for Ting’s dad. Commander Zhang pulled strings and Ting’s dad was offered a prestigious promotion. When Ting’s dad found out he was furious, he hated going through a back door. Another person took the promotion. The newly promoted person was spiteful and felt threatened by Ting’s dad. That was why Ting’s dad was handed a hard case to crack.

Ting’s dad was stripped of his bonus entitlements. He was sent to the most dangerous areas to patrol and investigate the illegal dealings of those crooks that attacked Ting Ting. Those crooks didn’t dare to use loaded weapons but every few days they’d come to find Ting’s dad to provoke him. Ting Ting’s been working and looking after Qin Yun at the hospital so it was rare she had free time to visit her parents’ home. It wasn’t until she was attacked that she found out anything about Ting’s dad’s situation.

Qin Song felt worried after understanding the depth of his dad-in-law’s tenacity to face dangerous situations head on. What worried Qin Song more was the thought of his and Ting Ting’s future son taking after his dad-in-law’s personality. That was a deadly thought!

‘Song Song, take Ting Ting home,’ Ting’s mum said. She aged a lot in one day.

She was both drained body and soul. 'Song Song take good care of Ting Ting. She's a timid kid. She'll have nightmares about her ordeal for the next few nights and she'll cry in her sleep.'

'Mum, don't worry. I promise I'll take good care of Ting Ting,' Qin Song said. He was still worried about his and Ting Ting's future son's personality but his mum-in-law mentioning Ting Ting's name made him snap out of it. 'About dad's situation, leave it to me. Mum, don't scold dad anymore. Dad is hurting on the inside to see Ting Ting hurt too. I'll make sure to keep Ting Ting from getting hurt again. It's my fault. I haven't been a good son. I've been caught up with work and haven't been coming to visit you and dad like before, otherwise I would have found out about dad's situation earlier.'

'Song Song, don't carry everything on your shoulders. If you feel responsible for everyone, you'll break easily,' Ting's mum said.

Ting's mum was satisfied with her considerate son-in-law. That was why she doted on him. But she could see Song Song carrying the burden of his company and his dad's frailing health had put too much pressure on him. She didn't want to add her husband's situation onto his plate too.

Qin Song returned to Ting Ting's old room. He opened the door and it bumped into someone who was eavesdropping.

'Ah!' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting stepped back from the door. Song Song steadied her and laughed at her getting caught eavesdropping. She glared at him for making fun of her.

'Song Song, what happened?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'It's nothing. Leave it to me. Honey, you don't have to worry,' Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting shook her head. 'Song Song, don't do anything. When grandpa secretly called your granddad, my dad was furious and refused to talk to grandpa. My dad doesn't even want to see my grandpa for New Year. Song Song, promise me you won't do anything to help my dad behind his back. Dad hates that the most.'

Qin Song let go of Ting Ting. 'Ok, I won't interfere. I'll stand by and watch

those crooks torment your parents.'

'Song Song...' Han Ting Ting called in a choked voice.

Han Ting Ting started to cry. She felt helpless to do anything for her parents that she loved and respected.

Qin Song was always defeated by Ting Ting's tears. His heart couldn't take seeing her sad and he stopped his teasing. 'I was teasing you. Where has your sense of humour gone?' He pinched her red nose. 'Honey, don't worry. Let me handle it. I'll find a way to help your dad without ruffling his feathers and also teach those crooks a lesson. Will that make you feel better?'

Han Ting Ting didn't have an option but to believe in Song Song. 'That'll be good.'

'If I do a good deed for your parents, how will you show me your appreciation?' Qin Song asked teasingly. 'Will you let me kiss you? Or will you kiss me?'

Han Ting Ting thought Song Song was serious and she seriously thought about what she would do to show him she appreciated him taking care of her parents. 'Wait until the deed is done. Then I'll let you know how I'll show you my appreciation.'

Qin Song felt like he was given the key to Pandora's box and couldn't wait to unlock it. 'I'll hold you to your promise. After I perform my good deed, you can't go back on your promise.'

Han Ting Ting let the meaning of Song Song's words soak in then she nodded her head to seal their deal.

Qin Song went for a stroll to the nearby shops that sold cigarettes. After a while he found his dad-in-law sitting under a tree.

'Dad!' Qin Song called and sat next to his dad-in-law. 'Dad, let's go home. Mum's not angry anymore.'

Ting's dad closed his eyes and shook his head.

'Dad the moment you left, mum said you have nowhere to go but to buy

cigarettes,’ Qin Song joked to ease the tensed atmosphere.

Ting’s dad opened his eyes and looked as if the joke increased his worries. ‘I don’t have money on me.’

Qin Song awkwardly stood. ‘Dad, I’ll go buy your cigarettes.’

‘Don’t go,’ Ting’s dad said.

Ting’s dad stood but because of his leg injury he couldn’t stand straight.

Qin Song quickly steadied his dad-in-law. ‘Dad, let’s go for a father and son drinking session. Besides, you don’t have a late shift tonight.’

Ting’s dad hesitated for a while. But his heart was frustrated and bruised. A drinking session with his good son-in-law would get rid of some of his frustrations. ‘What about our wives?’

‘Before I left I ordered for dinner to be delivered. Mum and Ting Ting won’t need to leave the house,’ Qin Song said.

‘Ok, let’s go,’ Ting’s dad said.

That night Qin Song and Ting’s dad were a two drunken father and son-in-law duo.

Qin Song and Ting’s dad drank the strongest alcohol. At the start of their drinking session they drank with shot glasses. Later Ting’s dad hit the table and requested for two bowls. The moment the bowls arrived, Ting’s dad poured alcohol into the bowls and gulped down his bowl in one go. Alcohol settled in Ting’s dad’s stomach gave him an excuse to let go of his image and confided to Qin Song all the grievances he bottled.

Qin Song sat stunned beside his dad-in-law, he was amazed at his dad-in-law’s alcohol tolerance.

Ting’s dad drank happily and burped comfortably. He refilled the bowls and gestured for his son-in-law to continue drinking.

Qin Song didn’t dare not to drink. His shaky hands held the bowl to his mouth. His heart cried and telepathically sent a final love note to his wife – ‘Honey, I love you. I’m willing to risk my life to make you happy.’

Qin Song gulped down his bowl, his calm expression didn't change and he refilled the bowls for them.

Ting's dad loved to drink but his job didn't give him many opportunities to drink. He wanted to make up for those loss opportunities with his son-in-law. In his heart he could see his son-in-law's sincere attitude toward him and was overjoyed to have such a good son-in-law.

Ting's dad was tipsy and hit his son-in-law's left arm. 'Kiddo, you're ok in my book!'

The pitiful son-in-law who recently recovered from his left arm injury cringed in pain from Ting's dad's hit of approval. Half of the son-in-law's bowl of alcohol fell out too.

'The moment I saw you, I knew you were the one for my Ting Bao! You're like your granddad. Strong and reliable. That's how a man should be. Not scared of heaven or earth. A real life hero,' Ting's dad blabbered.

Ting's dad usually didn't talk much. But with a little alcohol in his system, he felt he could talk to his heart's content. His drunken words weren't eloquent but his son-in-law understood the honesty behind the blabbering.

Qin Song put his empty bowl down and tried to sit up with a clear head. 'Dad, the way I see it... you and my granddad are the ones that are alike! When my granddad was younger, he hated to stand by and watch the people around him get hurt. He took matters into his own hands, played by the rules... Ting Ting's grandpa who shadowed my granddad was the same too. They would oppose their superiors if they felt their superiors abused their power. I was little back then but I remembered many things about my granddad. If I had to hand in reports about who inspired me and who I looked up to, I would shamelessly write about how my granddad is my hero.'

Ting's dad heard his son-in-law embarrassed by the confession and couldn't help but laugh.

Qin Song on the other hand changed his embarrassed tone to a serious tone. 'My mum's little brother was granddad and grandmother's only son. When my youngest uncle was deployed to a dangerous place... my grandmother knelt in front of my granddad crying and begging him to save their only son from going

on a one way mission. But my granddad silently let my youngest uncle go... my youngest uncle lived a glorious life. I saw with my own eyes my granddad in his study room holding my uncle's portrait and silently crying.'

Ting's dad's face was bleached white. Ting's dad understood his son-in-law's innuendo.

Ting's dad felt it was rare for a parent not to love their own child. For more than twenty years he'd meticulously raised his precious daughter. If he heard Ting Ting cried out in pain, his heart would cry out in pain too.

Before Ting Ting married Song Song the Han household lived on the poor side. But Ting's dad didn't mind being poor as long as his family walked in a straight line. He didn't care for materialistic trappings. But the sight of blood dripping down his Ting Bao's cheek, her crouching and crying in a corner tore his heart apart. It made him regret holding his pride above the safety and comfort of his family.

Ting's dad felt what Ting's mum said out of anger was the blunt truth, he wasn't a good person. He wasn't a good husband or a good dad.

Qin Song was tipsy and kept shaking his head to wake himself up.

'Dad! These days it's rare to find someone like dad that lives with a clean conscience. I admire that about you. But I don't understand why someone with your experience, compassion and solid work ethics won't sacrifice your ideals to take on a position of power. Dad, I believe if you were in charge you'll do everything in your power to find ways to keep the streets safer and that will help to keep many more people safe than you wasting your potential under the thumb of spiteful people,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song paused to gauge his dad-in-law's reaction. 'It hurts me to see mum and Ting Ting scared as they were today. Dad, you said I'm like my granddad. But I know I'm not as clean cut as my granddad who would sacrifice his own son to follow protocol. Anything involving my family or the woman I love, I don't care about what's right or wrong, I'd do whatever it takes to guarantee their safety.'

After Qin Song's emotional outpour he gulped down another bowl of alcohol.

Ting's dad processed his son-in-law's words for a long time then nodded his

head. Ting's dad understood what needed to be done.

Back at home, a drunk Qin Song hugged the shoe rack and kept calling out 'honey, my wife.'

Zhang Yu saw her son refusing to let go of the shoe rack and her daughter-in-law had disinfectant on the left cheek. It horrified Zhang Yu and left her speechless.

Han Ting Ting was worried Zhang Yu was imagining the worst so she quickly asked the driver to help Song Song to their room. But Song Song wouldn't move. Han Ting Ting and Zhang Yu stepped in to help lift Song Song but he was too strong. Finally Han Ting Ting had to ask Xiao Tao's dad from next door to drag Song Song upstairs. It took four people to put a drunk Song Song to bed. Han Ting Ting realised she wasn't married to a human because a human couldn't be that strong.

During the night Han Ting Ting tried to stay awake to look after Song Song. She thought he was an obedient drunk, who slept and dreamt. Her exhaustion took over and she fell asleep whilst watching over him.

Han Ting Ting in her dream relived the beer bottle incident, her parents fighting and she kept crying out for Song Song but couldn't find him anywhere. 'Song Song...'

Ting Ting calling out Qin Song's name woke him up. He quickly sat up and hugged her. 'Honey, I'm right here.'

Ting Ting crying and calling out Qin Song's name in her dream made his heart jump for joy. He felt like a mountain and wanted her to lean onto him for the rest of their lives.

Qin Song gently patted Ting Ting's back. 'Ting Bao, wake up. You're only dreaming.'

Han Ting Ting in her dream state heard Song Song calling her to wake up. She opened her eyes and saw that she was leaning against his chest. She rubbed her eyes and sat up.

Outside the window the sky was lighting up, it was nearly morning.

Han Ting Ting felt thirsty and stepped over Song Song's body to get out of bed. But she accidentally stepped on something stiff and heard him cry out. 'Song Song, what's wrong?'

Qin Song pulled the bed sheet up to his waist to cover up the unintentional injury his wife gave him. He gritted his teeth. 'It's nothing.'

Han Ting Ting rubbed Song Song's face to check if he was feverish. His face was hot and it worried her. 'Song Song, do you feel uncomfortable anywhere? Do you want a glass of water?'

Qin Song closed his eyes and enjoyed the sensation of Ting Ting's soft hands rubbing his face. He didn't hear what she said to him. In a daze he simply nodded his head.

After Han Ting Ting came back with a glass of water her husband was missing. Only a wrinkled bed sheet and pillows were left behind on the bed. She walked to the bathroom and knocked on the door. 'Song Song...'

Han Ting Ting heard moans from the bathroom followed by a grunt then silence. Song Song opened the door and looked at her like she was guilty of something.

Han Ting Ting didn't think too deeply about it and gave him the glass of milk. 'Song Song, drink it while it's hot.'

Qin Song was in no mood for hot milk. He quickly went to the bed and put the bed sheet over his body from head to toe to hide. He was embarrassed his wife overheard him whilst he was taking care of his morning glory in the bathroom.

End of Chapter Nine (Part 2 of 2)

Related

Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting's first Christmas Day together as a married couple coincided with the first day of snow that year.

Han Ting Ting woke up early on Christmas Day. She went downstairs and looked out the window and saw snowflakes falling outside. She loved snow! She rushed upstairs to wake Song Song up. 'Song Song! Song Song!'

Qin Song had worked overtime last night and didn't get to bed until three in the morning. He was still sleepy when Ting Ting heartlessly called him to wake up. He rolled over and tucked his head under his pillow. 'Honey, what's wrong?'

Han Ting Ting jumped onto the bed. 'It's snowing outside! Song Song, wake up and come outside to see the first day of snow with me.'

Qin Song sighed. He saw Ting Ting's excitement through his squinted eyes. 'It snows every year.'

Han Ting Ting from the country could count the number of days she saw snow on one hand. She couldn't understand the bored look on Song Song's face at the mention of snow. 'Ok Song Song, go back to sleep. I'll go play in the snow outside by myself.'

Han Ting Ting couldn't wait for Song Song to wake up and jumped off the bed to go outside.

'Hey, wait,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song grabbed his 'little country bun' and pulled her back onto the bed. He lifted the bed sheet over them and hugged Ting Ting from behind. He rested his face between the curve of her neck and shoulder, inhaled her scent and closed his tired eyes. 'Give me ten minutes.'

It was hard for Qin Song to have a weekend off and when he finally had a weekend off he couldn't sleep in. The ground was covered by white snow. His sleepy mood turned elated as he took his sheltered 'little country bun' to see the wide world outside and build snow people with her.

Qin Song's middle name was 'play.' Since he was little his snowman building skills were unbeatable. He slowly built a row of snow people whilst holding his wife's hand on the front lawn. The little kids in the neighbourhood playing outside were immediately drawn to his vivid snow people.

Most of the neighbouring little kids went to Ting Ting's preschool. The little kids all loved their teacher Miss Han. The moment they spotted Qin Song's wife outside they all ran to her and surrounded her. The little kids kept twittering nonsense to his wife. A moment ago he was happily building the snow people whilst holding his wife's hand. Then a moment later he gritted his teeth. He wasn't happy he was pushed aside by little kids who weren't half his size. His blazing eyes asked them 'how dare they break apart a happily married couple?'

'Ahem,' Qin Song coughed. He swept his intelligent eyes around the circle of little kids who spoiled his precious snow date with his wife and smiled deviously. 'My little friends, should we get into teams and have a fun snow fight?'

Qin Song was positive his plan to distract his enemies would work. Then he'd take back his wife and run far away from his enemies' sight.

The little kids fell into Qin Song's trap.

'Ok!' the little kids said together. They ran beside Qin Song's wife. 'Miss Han, I want to be on your team.'

A chorus of little kids wanting to be on the same team as Qin Song's wife was an unforeseen setback to his plan to get back his wife.

The result of the snow war was that there were two opposing teams. Qin Song on one team and the little kids took his wife hostage to be on their team. He was under attack by round snow bombs. No matter where he hid, each time his head poked out of his hiding spot more round snow bombs smashed against his face and neck. Outnumbered and no escape in sight, he realised he needed to temporarily wave a white flag. With his enemies' guard down, it would bid him time to think of another way to get back his wife.

Qin Song's backup plan had worked. Whilst the kids played amongst themselves, he used it as an opening to piggy back his wife away from the snow war zone. As he ran his wife was shaken from side to side on his back and she laughed like a crazy fool.

Qin Song piggy backed 'little country bun' to their driveway then she climbed down from his back. He silently held her face and bit her lips.

'Ah!' Han Ting Ting mumbled a cry.

Qin Song wasn't going to let his wife be captured by his little enemies again. He pushed Ting Ting against the side of the car. She gasped from the shock of her back being rammed onto the car and her chest was pressed against his hard chest. His animal instinct took over and he kissed her more forcefully. It wasn't an elegant orchestrated kiss. It was the frantically swallow her whole kind of kiss. He closed his eyes and hugged her tighter until not even a snowflake could fall between their hot bodies. He kissed her to the extent of making the world that only the two of them shared to spin chaotically. Their tongues sought out each other. His mint mouthwash was the only cool sensation on their hot tongues. They couldn't feel the cold snowflakes on their bodies. All they could feel was their bodies tingling together.

Qin Song was disappointed when he heard his little enemies' footsteps. They figured out his ruse and tracked down his hiding spot with his wife. He reluctantly let go of Ting Ting. Her legs became jelly and her back slowly slid down the side of the car. He quickly grabbed hold of her waist to stop her from falling onto the ground of snow. Suddenly he felt like he'd climbed the highest mountain and smiled. He rubbed his cheek against her soft and hot cheek.

Qin Song was elated he got to kiss his wife in public.

'Honey,' Qin Song whispered and nibbled his wife's ear. 'In the future when we have a child together, will you love our child more than me? Then you'll forget you have a husband?'

Qin Song didn't like Ting Ting's attention on the little kids. From the sideline he had to endure her laughing and playing with the little kids. That was when an image of her laughing and playing with their future baby popped into his head. He wanted to protest out loud, her attention should be solely his. He couldn't take her away from the little kids fast enough as he wanted to in order to kiss her senseless and have her undivided attention on him.

Han Ting Ting thought about Song Song's question deeply... would she love their child too much to make Song Song unhappy? She loved kids to pieces. They

smelled sweet, their little cheeks were soft and they were simply too loveable! She wanted their future child to look like Song Song. Their future child would be loveable as Song Song, round dark eyes, their smile would light up the sky, their cute frown would make it irresistible not to console them... she pursed her swollen lips that Song Song bit and suckled. The thought of their future child that was a reflection of Song Song in her arms gave her an indescribable sense of happiness.

Han Ting Ting was too lost in her euphoria that she forgot to answer Song Song. He bent his head, kissed her lips and all over her hot and embarrassed face. No matter which way she angled her head, his lips always landed on her face.

‘I promise I won’t love our future child more than you,’ Han Ting Ting whispered.

Han Ting Ting wasn’t blind enough to tell Song Song the other part of her promise. She wasn’t going to love their future child more than Song Song, she was going to love them both with all her heart.

Qin Song heard Ting Ting’s promise not to love their future child more than him made him happy enough to fly amongst the clouds.

Little did Qin Song know that by the following Christmas, Ting Ting’s promise was a white lie. But on that day he heard her promise to always love him the most made him the happiness man alive. He didn’t know how to show the happiness he felt, he could only hug her tight to glue her to him for life. He closed his eyes and his smile couldn’t be melted away.

Later that day the happiest man alive brought his wife that he loved the most to have Christmas lunch and dinner at Commander Zhang’s mansion.

Qin Song and Ting Ting arrived at his granddad’s mansion whilst lunch was being prepared. He didn’t eat breakfast. He played with the little kids all morning and made him work up an appetite. He held Ting Ting’s hand to the dining table. He sat in between his granddad and Ting Ting. He picked up beef skewers and swallowed the beef to ease his appetite.

‘Song Song, can’t you act like a married man? You’re even more childish than before you got married,’ Commander Zhang scolded. Then he turned to one of his guards. ‘Get him a bowl of soup as an appetizer.’

The bowl of soup was brought to the table and Song Song put it in front of Han Ting Ting. She usually felt out of place in formal settings. Being dragged by Song Song to sit near the head of the dining table increased her anxiety. Apart from Commander Zhang, they were the only ones who sat at the dining table. How could she dare eat before everyone was seated?

Qin Song smiled too broadly. ‘Honey, let me feed you the soup.’

Han Ting Ting blushed red. Song Song was leaning into her so she pushed him away and stood.

At that moment Qin Song’s grandmother was a few steps away from the dining table. Mrs Zhang senior knocked her darling grandson on the head. ‘Can’t you see we have guests? You haven’t said one word of greeting to the guest. The moment you’re here you’ve caused a racket. How were you raised?’ She held her loveable granddaughter-in-law’s hand. ‘Ting Ting, come sit with me. Let Song Song make a fool of himself on his own. We’ll pretend we don’t know him.’

Mrs Zhang senior pulled Han Ting Ting over the right side of Commander Zhang to sit.

The Christmas food platters were brought to the table. Everyone took their seats. Commander Zhang spotted someone who was still standing nearby. ‘Yi Feng, come sit next to me.’

Chen Yi Feng bypassed people pulling chairs and went to sit next to Commander Zhang.

Chen Yi Feng was dressed casually. In his casual attire of a black shirt and pants, he looked like a dashing knight from the Arthurian legend. Mrs Zhang senior politely gave up her seat of honour for him and went to sit beside her grandson Qin Song.

The unexpected reshuffling of seats meant Ting Ting and Chen Yi Feng sat shoulder to shoulder and Qin Song could only sit stiffly and stare at them from the opposite side of the dining table.

Chen Yi Feng sat comfortably between Commander Zhang and Han Ting Ting. Chen Yi Feng rubbed her head. 'Hi.'

Chen Yi Feng turned to Commander Zhang and smiled. 'What a coincidence. Ting Ting was my neighbouring little sister that I've always treasured.'

Commander Zhang was slightly puzzled until he remembered. 'Ah, that's right. You own a property in the same district as Ting Ting's old home.'

Chen Yi Feng nodded. 'My house and Ting Ting's old home was walking distance between each other.'

Qin Song buried his head in his bowl. He held a piece of beef with chopsticks and used his teeth to rip the beef in half.

'Song Song,' Commander Zhang called and smiled. 'Because of Ting Ting, you and Yi Feng have a closer connection.'

Qin Song did his best to act nonchalantly as if Chen Yi Feng didn't affect him. He stuffed more food into his bowl and grunted as a courteous acknowledgement of his granddad's comment.

'Yi Feng's father and I are friends. Song Song that means you should greet Yi Feng as your uncle,' Commander Zhang said.

Commander Zhang didn't know Chen Yi Feng was his grandson's love rival and unintentionally added another stab to his grandson's already weakened heart by stating another connection to tie Chen Yi Feng and his grandson closer.

Chen Yi Feng deliberately looked at Qin Song with an aura of an elder looking down at his nephew.

Qin Song choked on his food. On Qin Song's other side was Li Wei Ran who was laughing so hard that his shoulders shook.

Qin Song whilst choking thought about the meaning of a human tragedy.

Qin Song realised a human tragedy was witnessing his love rival and his wife sit beside each other shoulder to shoulder in public. It was bad enough he couldn't leap over the dining table and scratch the smug look off his love rival's face, but he had to degrade himself by calling his love rival 'uncle.'

Chen Yi Feng's father and Commander Zhang together fought off enemies in

the past. Chen Yi Feng's father was injured and was transferred to a country post. Chen Yi Feng's father was the one who took Ting's dad under his wing.

Commander Zhang's intention of inviting Chen Yi Feng over for Christmas festivities was to create an opportunity for Song Song and Chen Yi Feng to bond. Commander Zhang heard the rumors of Chen Yi Feng wanting to dispose of Song Song's position as head of Qin's company. If Chen Yi Feng and Song Song became friends then Chen Yi Feng would withdraw the support offered to Song Song's uncles.

But Commander Zhang was perplexed why his precious youngest grandson didn't appreciate his good intentions. Not only didn't Song Song want to befriend Chen Yi Feng, Song Song's aloofness looked like he wanted nothing to do with Chen Yi Feng.

Han Ting Ting kept her eyes on Song Song who looked unhappy, which made her worried about Song Song. Chen Yi Feng next to her acted like there was no tension and he continued to chat gently with her.

After the Christmas lunch, Chen Yi Feng asked Han Ting Ting to have a catch up session with him in the living room. She obliged and sat next to him on the sofa.

'Are you and Song Song working together?' Han Ting Ting asked because Qin Sang had mentioned it to her during lunch.

'No,' Chen Yi Feng laughed. 'We're at loggerheads.'

Chen Yi Feng saw Han Ting Ting's eyes widened like she would whenever she was surprised. 'Ting Bao! If I'm Qin Song's enemy, will you hate me? In the future would you... wouldn't want to pick up my calls even more?

Han Ting Ting was silently thinking. Chen Yi Feng saw on her face the look of someone who was thinking of a way to protect her husband.

Chen Yi Feng remembered Han Ting Ting as a timid person who only smiled at him. He never thought there would be a day Han Ting Ting was weary of him. His heart ached but he acted calm on the outside. 'I was kidding.'

'I don't want to see you and Song Song fighting with each other. I don't know

anything about business... but if it's inevitable for the two of you to not be on the same page then I wouldn't hate you for opposing Song Song. But I wouldn't be happy about the situation,' Han Ting Ting said after serious thought.

'Little brat!' Chen Yi Feng said teasingly. 'I've doted on you for how many years? I can't believe after you got married you have forgotten everything I've done for you. Do you only have your husband in your heart?'

'As if,' Han Ting Ting said honestly. 'But the biggest part of my heart is reserved for Song Song.'

Han Ting Ting finally understood how Chen Yi Feng felt. After being together with Song Song, she understood once a person loved someone completely, there wasn't room to have feelings for anyone else.

Han Ting Ting felt blessed she got to experience reciprocated real love, it brought a lot of happiness into her world.

'Little brat you caused me to worry about you a lot. You used to be timid and quiet... but now it's good you've married the right person,' Chen Yi Feng said. He couldn't control himself, he hugged Han Ting Ting and stroke her hair. 'Ting Bao, it's enough for me to see you happy.'

Chen Yi Feng let Han Ting Ting go. She felt like in the past she couldn't understand his inner thoughts. But in that moment she felt he was decisive about something. She brushed off that feeling and accepted she didn't need to understand how his mind worked.

Whilst Ting Ting and Chen Yi Feng sat on the sofa chatting, Qin Song stood two metres behind them holding a glass of apple juice but he couldn't drink a single sip.

How dare 'little country bun' smile and laugh with that old critter? Qin Song's aura was that of someone outside in the rain without an umbrella. He gripped his glass of apple juice, gritted his teeth and strode to the sofa.

Han Ting Ting felt the sofa seat next to her compressed. She turned around and saw Song Song. She gave him a smile.

The sofa was long and had plenty of room to fit many people. Song Song didn't bother to look at Han Ting Ting. But he sat hip to hip with her. If she moved a

little, he'd inch closer to her. His hand shamelessly caressed her body up and down. He caressed her neck, arm, waist and thigh indiscriminately.

Han Ting Ting acted like she didn't notice what Song Song was doing. Chen Yi Feng knew Han Ting Ting too well and it didn't take long for him to notice she was uncomfortable. Chen Yi Feng glanced over at Qin Song who in that moment was rubbing Han Ting Ting's shoulder. Chen Yi Feng laughed on the inside at Qin Song's petty tactics to get rid of him. Then Chen Yi Feng stood and left the sofa.

The moment Chen Yi Feng was gone, Song Song withdrew his hand and written on Song Song's face was – 'I'm unhappy, hurry up and make me feel better.'

'Honey, where are you going?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song pulled Ting Ting onto his lap before she could escape. He locked her in his arms.

'Don't be like this, there are guests around us,' Han Ting Ting said.

'All the guests know that you're my wife!' Qin Song said and locked his arms around Ting Ting tighter.

'I want to drink water,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting saw the knowing smiles of the guests around them. She felt it was disrespectful for her and Song Song to be too affectionate in front of elders. She wasn't thirsty but used it as an excuse to escape the smiles aimed at her and Song Song.

Qin Song didn't care about the critters staring at them. He passed his glass of apple juice to Ting Ting. 'Here!'

'You've drank from it,' Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song pinched her waist and whispered into her ear. 'Are you going to drink or not?'

Han Ting Ting accepted the glass of apple juice and took a sip. Song Song pinched her waist a little harder and she gulped half of the glass of apple juice down her throat.

Qin Song's heart bloomed. His 'little country bun' was drinking the same glass of apple juice he drank from. That would neutralise her body from being

contaminated by that old critter's filthy touch.

Ting Ting didn't get to finish the glass of apple juice before Qin Song noticed the old critter had crept behind the sofa. The old critter's filthy phone was held in front of Ting Ting.

'Ting Ting, it's a call from Dong Dong. She wants to talk to you,' Chen Yi Feng said from behind the sofa.

Ting Ting stretched her arm to the coffee table and put the glass of apple juice on it. She unlocked Qin Song's arms and went to a quiet place to talk with that old critter's daughter.

Qin Song didn't miss the way that old critter displayed the filthy phone so Qin Song could see the wallpaper on the old critter's filthy phone. The wallpaper was a photo of the old critter holding a girl that was about seven or eight years old. His 'little country bun's' head leaned onto the girl's head. In the photo Ting Ting was beaming and her cheeks were rosy. They looked like a happy family of three.

Qin Song sat speechless on the sofa but on his face was written – 'I want to mincemeat that old critter!'

Han Ting Ting ended her call with Dong Dong. Then she went back into the living room but couldn't find Song Song. She asked the other guests if they've seen Song Song. One of the guests did see Song Song earlier. The guest said that Song Song's complexion wasn't good and he headed upstairs.

Han Ting Ting rushed upstairs. She knocked on the door of the bedroom that was reserved for him whenever he slept over Commander Zhang's mansion. After knocking for five minutes he still wouldn't open the door for her and that made her unhappy. 'Ok, I'll leave!'

Han Ting Ting turned around to leave but the door opened, followed by a loud bang noise. Song Song's arm reached out and grabbed her. He pulled her into the room.

'Aren't you supposed to be ignoring me?' Han Ting Ting asked teasingly. The moment the door closed, she pinched Song Song's cheeks and smiled. 'Look at you, you're a petty beast.'

Song Song bit Han Ting Ting's wrist and he was still puffing. She rubbed his face. 'Be good. Don't be angry anymore.'

'You were talking with Chen Yi Feng happily! As if you would care if I was angry,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song saw his bite mark on Ting Ting's wrist and became angry at himself. He licked her wrist to sooth the pressure of his bite.

Han Ting Ting giggled and pulled her hand away because she was easily ticklish. 'When you were talking with Qin Sang, I didn't get angry.'

Han Ting Ting's intention was to let Song Song know that Chen Yi Feng was a big part of her past. Chen Yi Feng treated her well and she liked him for a long time. But it was like Qin Song and Qin Sang, it was all in the past. In Han Ting Ting's heart she could only fit one person to love and Song Song was the one living inside her heart.

Qin Song misunderstood Ting Ting's intention.

'Han-Ting-Ting!' Qin Song said coldly. 'I didn't confide in you about my past for you to throw it back in my face!'

Han Ting Ting was in disbelief. How did her good intention ended up as ammunition aimed at Song Song?

Han Ting Ting felt framed. 'I confided in you too. I didn't tell you about Chen Yi Feng for you to use it as an excuse to be angry at me.'

'You think I'm accusing you without evidence? I'm not blind. I saw the way you and him were lovey-dovey in front of me!' Qin Song boomed. 'If you want to go and be his daughter's step-mum then go ahead and leave! I don't need you! Don't appear in front of me anymore!'

'You...' Han Ting Ting said softly.

Han Ting Ting's eyes were full of tears. She only said a few words with Chen Yi Feng. She wasn't lovey-dovey toward Chen Yi Feng. It was Song Song who used her past as his amusement. Song Song never missed a chance to step-mum that and step-mum over there, it was hard for her to swallow his mocking. She turned away to wipe her tears that fell.

‘Why aren’t you leaving?’ Qin Song asked coldly.

Song Song was no stranger to bullying people, he knew when to use heavy words to hurt someone. Han Ting Ting felt her heart was torn, she wiped her tears, opened the door and ran outside before slamming the door.

The moment Ting Ting left Qin Song regretted everything he said. He wanted to chase after her but the door was slammed shut. He punched the door.

Outside Han Ting Ting wanted to go home... at home no one would chase her away.

But Han Ting Ting’s parents would ask her why she came back to live with them. What was she supposed to say... Song Song chased her away because of Chen Yi Feng?

Han Ting Ting couldn’t say that to her parents, her dad would have a heart attack!

Chen Yi Feng would worry about Han Ting Ting too if he found out Song Song chased her away because of him. Earlier she told Chen Yi Feng she was living a good life with Song Song.

Han Ting Ting was walking with her head down toward the bathroom. Suddenly she heard footsteps from the stairs, she looked up and Chen Yi Feng was standing in front of her.

Chen Yi Feng was surprised to see Han Ting Ting’s red eyes. ‘Why are you crying? What happened?’

Han Ting Ting rubbed her red eyes and shook her head. ‘I wasn’t crying.’

Chen Yi Feng sighed. Of course he could sense if Han Ting Ting was crying even with his eyes closed. ‘Christmas dinner is ready downstairs in the dining room. Where’s Qin Song?’

Han Ting Ting heard Song Song’s name mentioned and her nose stung more. She didn’t take notice of Chen Yi Feng’s concerned look. She ran to the bathroom and sat on the toilet seat to sob.

Han Ting Ting didn’t know how long she sat on the toilet seat. She heard a knock on the bathroom door followed by Qin Sang’s voice. ‘Ting Ting? Are you in

there?’

‘Um,’ Han Ting Ting said and wiped her face.

‘Dinner’s starting. Grandmother asked me to come find you. Are you ok? Do you need me to come in and help you with anything?’ Qin Sang asked.

‘No need. I’ll be right out,’ Han Ting Ting said.

The moment Han Ting Ting stepped downstairs, everyone turned to her and couldn’t miss her red swollen eyes. She reflexively sat down on an empty seat and kept her head down.

Unfortunately for Han Ting Ting the Christmas dinner seating arrangements were different from the Christmas lunch seating arrangements. The empty seat Han Ting Ting sat on was beside Song Song. She didn’t dare to look at Song Song.

Commander Zhang gave the signal for everyone to start dinner and no one dared not pick up their chopsticks and put food into their bowls.

Qin Song scooped soup into a soup bowl for Ting Ting but she didn’t accept it or looked at him. A moment later he carefully slid the soup bowl in front of her. But she was still angry and pushed the soup bowl away.

Qin Song slammed his chopsticks down. He forcefully took back the soup bowl and some of the soup was flung onto the table and his neck.

Everyone heard the commotion and Zhang Yu was the first to open her mouth. ‘Song Song, what are you doing?’

Mrs Zhang senior wasn’t happy with her darling grandson either. ‘Song Song, I can’t believe you. You gave Ting Ting a scare.’

Like the others at the dining table, Zhang Pu wasn’t happy with her nephew. ‘Song Song, hurry up and scoop a new bowl of soup for your wife!’

Qin Song was accustomed to being stubborn. Usually he would do whatever he wanted to and no one could persuade him to change his mind. He slammed his bowl onto the table and wanted to explode. But he turned to look at Ting Ting and all his anger sunk.

In that moment Qin Sang scooped a new bowl of soup for Han Ting Ting. Qin Sang didn’t care about her cousin-in-law’s tantrum, she saved her concern for

Han Ting Ting. Han Ting Ting was doing her best not to cry, but everyone was taking her side and worried about it. It made Han Ting Ting's heart erupt with sadness, warmth and a fresh sense of belonging all in one hit. Han Ting Ting was overwhelmed and couldn't hold back her tears.

Chen Yi Feng didn't say a word, his eyes never stopped probing Han Ting Ting's posture. Chen Yi Feng didn't need to see her expression for his back to turn icy cold. Chen Yi Feng was itching to give his little 'nephew' a painful lesson.

Everyone gathered around the bright Christmas tree after dinner. The little kids were salivating to open their presents that were within hand reach. But Qin Song sat at the corner of the sofa with a stay-away-from-me aura around him.

Han Ting Ting stood at a far distance from Song Song. She was contemplating her sleeping arrangement. She couldn't go to her parents' home. Her option left was to go to Song Song's room to sleep first. If Song Song came in and saw her sleeping he would go find a different room to sleep.

Han Ting Ting quietly went upstairs. She gently opened the door and gently closed the door. Suddenly someone from outside pushed the door open. She stumbled back and nearly fell.

It was Song Song. He came into the room and slammed the door shut.

'Usually you don't listen to me. But I tell you to leave and you actually left?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song lifted Ting Ting's chin. 'Look at me! What is it about me that can't match up to Chen Yi Feng's standard?'

Han Ting Ting shoved Song Song's hand away from her chin. 'I've never compared you to him. It's you that's constantly comparing yourself to him!'

'Every time he appears in front of you, you're a different person. How can I not compare myself to him?' Qin Song said. 'You've liked him for so many years, how can I not compare myself to him?'

Song Song's tone lacked its usual air of self-confidence. Han Ting Ting's heart softened even though she was still a little angry with him, her heart ached for him that he doubted her feelings for him.

‘Song Song, Chen Yi Feng took care of me the way I took care of Dong Dong. Since I was little, he treated me well. Nothing ever happened between me and him. He never knew about how I felt about him in the past. Is it because of my one sided feelings for him in the past that you don’t want me to talk to him?’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song gritted his teeth and let go of his ego. ‘What I care about isn’t him! I just need to think about you marrying me so you can divorce me to be with him makes me want to strangle you!’

‘It’s not like that anymore...’ Han Ting Ting said softly.

Han Ting Ting stopped to ponder... she and Song Song have been through a lot of hard times together, they’ve leaned on each other to get pass it. They’ve hugged each other, kissed each other and have been sleeping in the same bed for a while. It was Song Song who made her heart flutter, it had nothing to do with Chen Yi Feng.

Qin Song reached for Ting Ting’s hand and spoke gently. ‘Today I treated you badly. Will you find it hard to forgive me?’

Ting Ting quietly kept her head down. She refused to look at Qin Song. He held her hand tighter. ‘When we got engaged, you wanted to find someone to marry for the sake of being married once. For me there were too many women to choose from but my eyes were set on you. At that time I thought I randomly chose you. But later, we were happy together. Then I seriously thought about why did I choose you out of all those women? It hit me, I didn’t randomly choose you. I fell in love with you at first sight. I didn’t know back then I only felt we were compatible. The truth was I loved you from the first day we met. Out of all those women I only wanted to be with you. Qin Sang... looking back I can see Qin Sang wasn’t important to me. If it wasn’t for Li Wei Ran then I would have dumped Qin Sang quickly. I never loved Qin Sang. I couldn’t accept Li Wei Ran needed her more than he needed me so I foolishly wanted to steal her back to get back at him. Ting Ting, it’s different with you. You’re my wife, but I feel more insecure than I did when there was nothing between us.’

Song Song usually spoke arrogantly, Han Ting Ting never heard him lower himself before and spoke with such vulnerability. She was deeply moved.

‘It’s because I’m not the only one you like. You’ve liked Chen Yi Feng for many years. You married me because of him. It drives me nuts. At work Chen Yi Feng sits on my head and at home the woman I love the most liked him longer than liking me, it makes me angry to death. Seeing you and him being familiar with one another made me explode. Honey, I was wrong. I’m sorry,’ Qin Song apologised.

The young Qin master for the first time lowered his status and begged for forgiveness from someone.

During the Christmas dinner everyone was blaming him for not treating Ting Ting well. But he hated himself for treating Ting Ting badly more than anyone else. Her eyes were red, she looked weak as if a snowflake falling on her would topple her over and it made him wanted to strangle himself!

Qin Song’s anger was on the same level as his anxiety.

Qin Song for thirty years was fed with a silver spoon. There wasn’t anyone like Ting Ting. No matter how many times he failed to get her to return his love, he was helplessly in love with her and couldn’t stop even if he wanted to stop loving her.

Qin Song realised he didn’t love Ting Ting because she was conveniently by his side. There were plenty of women prettier, gentler and smarter than Ting Ting. But he chose Ting Ting, no one else could replace her in his heart. It was a fated love.

Han Ting Ting interlocked her fingers with Song Song. ‘You were that mean to me, you think after one apology I’ll let it go that easily?’

Qin Song heard Ting Ting’s gentle tone and he relaxed a little. ‘You can hit me!’

Qin Song lifted Ting Ting’s hand and used her palm to slap his cheek.

‘Ah!’ Han Ting Ting cried out because the slap hurt her palm more than it hurt Song Song’s cheek.

Song Song quickly blew on Han Ting Ting’s sore palm. ‘Song Song, it doesn’t hurt.’

Song Song’s anxiously soothing her sore palm made Han Ting Ting’s heart

flutter more than any other time.

Song Song was childish, stubborn, arrogant and belittled other people. He was the opposite of Han Ting Ting's ideal lover.

But Song Song toward Han Ting Ting was sincere, honest, let his image go and showed her he loved her in different ways. Living with him she received a lot of his sweet love, it was a thousand times sweeter than the unrequited love she let go.

Han Ting Ting wanted to treasure Song Song's precious love reserved for her.

'Honey!' Qin Song said. He kissed her fingers and looked at Ting Ting pitifully. 'I know I was wrong, don't be angry with me anymore.'

Han Ting Ting took her hand back and looked at Song Song. 'You have an unpredictable bad temper. How would I know if next time you were angry at me, you won't point your finger at me and chase me out of the house?'

Qin Song lifted his hand. 'I promise...'

'You don't have to make a bloody oath!' Han Ting Ting said. She was scared Song Song would make an impulsive promise he couldn't keep. 'As long as you remember how you treated me badly. Song Song, I'm used to your temper. I can let it go as long as you don't take it too far. In the afternoon when you were mean to me and chased me away like you didn't want to see me for another minute, you hurt me a lot.'

'The moment I said that to you I regretted it immediately. I wanted to keep you from leaving the room but you ran off too quick. I never wanted to chase you away, How can I let you leave me?' Qin Song explained. He hugged Ting Ting. 'Honey, in the future I'll never ask you to leave again. No matter how angry I get, I won't treat you badly as I did today. I promise!'

It turned out Song Song was an obedient kid who kept his promises. Many years later, there were countless times he lost his temper and sometimes he vented on Han Ting Ting but he never chased her out of the house.

'Honey...' Qin Song whispered.

'What about me?' Han Ting Ting asked

‘Honey, you can’t go anywhere,’ Qin Song spat out. He pulled his hair and opened the door. ‘I’ll go!’

A little later the obedient Song Song returned to their room. Han Ting Ting laughed at his pitiful look. ‘Song Song, you can’t say ‘step-mum’ anymore! I don’t like hearing you talk that way.’

‘Um, I won’t!’ Qin Song promised.

‘You can’t fight with me over Chen Yi Feng again. A man shouldn’t be that petty,’ Han Ting Ting said.

‘Ok...’ Qin Song said reluctantly.

‘You can’t, a o um a um um...’ Han Ting Ting said to Song Song’s inattentive ears.

After Qin Song felt he was forgiven. His attention was distracted by Ting Ting’s sweet mouth opening and closing that he didn’t hear what else she said. He felt his mouth dry. He couldn’t hold in the temptation, hugged her and bent down to lock lips with her. He deliberately showed off his kissing talent, he kissed her gently, his tongue teased her tongue and he felt her weaken inside his chest.

Qin Song took a deep breath. He lifted Ting Ting into his arms and carried her to the bed. Her soft body trembled against his chest...

Suddenly Qin Song and Ting Ting’s loving moment was interrupted by persistent knocking on the door.

Qin Song and Ting Ting froze on the spot.

‘Who is it?’ Qin Song asked.

‘Song Song, it’s me. Your grandmother,’ Mrs Zhang senior said from outside the door.

Han Ting Ting regained her senses. She hit Song Song’s shoulder, jumped down from his arms, covered her face and ran to the bed to hide herself under the bed sheet.

Qin Song punched a wall. He opened the door for his oblivious grandmother.

Mrs Zhang senior saw her darling grandson looked angry and was deeply concerned. She pulled him out of the room. 'Song Song, you still haven't reconciled with Ting Ting?'

'What are you talking about?' Qin Song asked.

'Kiddo! You only know how to bully others!' Mrs Zhang senior scolded. She pinched her darling grandson's frustrated cheek. 'Ting Ting is sweet, gentle and loving! If you dare make her sad again everyone won't forgive you! Did you see your dad's expression at dinner?'

'Grandmother...' Qin Song said.

'Your granddad asked me to come up and give you an earful. Don't think because Ting Ting's family background is not rich that you can treat her however you want! When Ting Ting's grandpa was protecting your granddad from bombs and bullets, you won't even be born yet! You were lucky today there were guests and we let it slide. But the next time you dare bully Ting Ting, I'll take out the horse whip to give to your granddad for him to whip you until you run out of tears!' Mrs Zhang senior threatened.

'I know, I know,' Qin Song said. He didn't have enough patience left to listen to the rest of his grandmother's lecture. 'Ting Ting and I want to sleep. Grandmother you should go sleep too.'

Mrs Zhang senior gave her grandson a sly smile and hit his shoulder. She gave him two sets of pyjamas and two sets of toiletries. 'The old pyjamas are for you. The new one is for Ting Ting. Go back inside and console Ting Ting. Whose family would want their daughter to live with your moodiness? I'll go give the horse whip a good clean. Don't make me give the horse whip to your granddad!'

Han Ting Ting wanted to brush her teeth and heard Song Song's footsteps. She poked her head out of the bathroom. She saw him holding pyjamas and smiled. 'Is that for me?'

'It's mine,' Qin Song said. He gently pushed Ting Ting's head back into the bathroom. He gave his old pyjamas to her and pointed to his old set of toiletries he stored in the bathroom. 'Honey, you use those.'

Han Ting Ting held a blue electric toothbrush that looked like it suited men

more than women. 'Song Song, is this your toothbrush?'

'Um,' Qin Song said.

Song Song looked like if Han Ting Ting dared not to use his toothbrush he was going to brush her teeth for her. She washed her face. Then with shaky hands put mint toothpaste onto the toothbrush and put the toothbrush into her mouth.

Finally Qin Song felt his whole body relaxed. He took out a new pink toothbrush and a new pink face towel. Then he stood shoulder to shoulder and hip to hip next to Ting Ting. They brushed their teeth together like a close pair of newlyweds.

The sky slowly became a dark night sky.

Song Song and Han Ting Ting were toasty warm in bed. She listened to him talk about the time he was twelve and why he broke the kid next door's leg. The whole day she was tensed being around upper class guests. Song Song's soothing voice relaxed her tired body and she fell asleep without being aware.

One of Qin Song's arms was used as Ting Ting's pillow. The other arm was wrapped around her waist and he gently patted her back. The other hand brushed the knots out of her soft hair. Then he gently caressed her cheek.

Qin Song thought he had the best life! In his life he finally met someone he could protect and who could sleep peacefully on his chest each night.

The dim bedroom light softly shone on Ting Ting's body. Her beautiful sleeping posture melted Qin Song's heart.

The wallpaper photo displayed on the old critter's filthy phone popped up inside Qin Song's head. That photo made him furiously jealous. He and Ting Ting haven't taken a photo together that was as close as she was with that old critter and the old critter's daughter in that wallpaper photo.

Qin Song reached for his phone. He switched off the sound and flash. He positioned the phone at a flattering angle. Then he pressed his face against Ting Ting's face. He forced himself not to smile. The moment he was about to take the photo, her eyes opened.

Song Song's nose and Han Ting Ting's nose bumped into each other. She woke up and felt his hot breath on her face. Her heart pounded. She took a deep breath and pressed her lips onto his lips.

Qin Song was stunned.

Ting Ting blushed. She opened her lips and bit Qin Song's lips. Then she was scared she bit too hard and licked his lips. She was gentle. But his body was feverish and it felt like her breath was gnawing his heart. The blood around his body flowed to one place below his stomach.

'Ah!' Ting Ting cried out.

Han Ting Ting's vision turned black and she felt a dull pain on her face.

Qin Song was overwhelmed and wanted to lie on top of Ting Ting. But he forgot he was holding his phone. The moment he opened his hand the phone fell. She was kissing him and her face shielded his face... the phone fell onto her face. It must have been painful because her cry echoed in their room.

Qin Song's heart exploded with anxiety and he sat up. 'Honey, my phone is customized so it's heavier than normal phones used by men.'

Ting Ting covered one side of her face and she curled her body. Qin Song hugged her and pulled her hand away to access her injury. Her eyes were closed and she was crying. He cursed his petty jealousy!

Qin Song let go of Ting Ting and jumped out of bed. 'Honey, I'm going to call for a doctor.'

'Song Song...' Han Ting Ting whispered and pulled him back to bed.

'What is it?' Qin Song asked.

'It's nothing. The phone fell on my cheek. It didn't hit my eyes,' Han Ting Ting explained.

Han Ting Ting cried out because of the sudden pain but after a while it didn't hurt.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting's cheek was swollen and bruised. He stood but she pulled him back down.

‘Don’t go to call for a doctor. Song Song, go get me an ice pack or my cheek will swell up like a bun,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song wanted to call a doctor but Ting Ting pleaded with him not to. ‘Honey, don’t move. I’ll right back with an ice pack.’

True to Song Song’s word, he came back to bed quicker than Han Ting Ting could find a comfortable position that wouldn’t put pressure on her injured cheek. He gently rested the ice pack on her cheek and laid beside her.

Unlike their mood before the phone fell, Qin Song and Han Ting Ting quietly hugged each other to sleep.

Qin Song was scared Ting Ting was still hurt. He hugged her from behind and held the ice pack on her injured cheek and waited for her to sleep.

Han Ting Ting leaned back onto Song Song’s body. ‘Song Song, it’s enough. You can let go of the ice pack. My cheek doesn’t hurt.’

‘Honey, go to sleep,’ Qin Song whispered. He carefully adjusted the bed sheet over Ting Ting’s body. He kissed her earlobe. ‘Be good and sleep.’

‘Um,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting was too sleepy to reason with Song Song. She felt her cheek was cold but her heart was warm. A moment later she fell asleep.

The next morning Han Ting Ting woke up and saw Song Song slept in the same position as last night. The ice pack fell on her pillow. She picked the ice pack up and felt it lost its chill. She put it on the headrest of their bed. Then she carefully got out of bed and went into the bathroom.

Song Song held the ice pack all night ensured that Han Ting Ting’s cheek didn’t swell. But it couldn’t prevent her cheek from turning black and blue like someone had punched her cheek. She remembered how he meticulously looked after her and couldn’t help but smile in front of the mirror.

Han Ting Ting lightly powdered her injured cheek but it didn’t hide the bruise. Usually she didn’t use concealer so she decided to go and ask to borrow Qin Sang’s concealer. Unexpectedly the moment she stepped out of the room she bumped into Chen Yi Feng. Chen Yi Feng was a special guest and was allowed to

sleep upstairs.

‘Morning!’ Chen Yi Feng greeted.

Han Ting Ting wanted to run back into the room but Chen Yi Feng called her to turn around and face him. She slowly turned around and he saw the bruise on her cheek.

‘Who did that to you? Qin Song?’ Chen Yi Feng asked.

‘No!’ Han Ting Ting denied. Whenever she was tensed she was like a headless chicken. ‘Song Song... he didn’t mean to...’

Chen Yi Feng saw Han Ting Ting’s panic, she wore more makeup than she usually wore and there was a black and blue bruise under her makeup. ‘He dared to hit you?’

Chen Yi Feng didn’t let Han Ting Ting finish her explanation. He pushed her aside, kicked Qin Song’s bedroom door down and strode into the room.

Qin Song heard a noise and forced himself to get out of bed. In his dreamy state he was shocked to see Chen Yi Feng was inside his room.

Chen Yi Feng laughed coldly. ‘You hit Ting Ting?’

Qin Song glared at Chen Yi Feng. ‘Are you crazy?’

Qin Song dismissed Chen Yi Feng and stepped toward the bathroom but was pulled back.

Who did Chen Yi Feng mistook Qin Song for? As if Qin Song would let his love rival come into his territory and be provoked to make the first move.

Chen Yi Feng punched Qin Song’s face but was surprised Qin Song didn’t avoid, defend or flinch at his hard punch.

Whilst Chen Yi Feng was surprised, Qin Song delivered a harder punch into Chen Yi Feng’s face and his lips bled. Chen Yi Feng laughed coldly.

The old critter could still laugh! Qin Song didn’t need to think twice and punched the other side of the old critter’s face.

End of Chapter Ten, except for Qin Song recounting his fight with Chen Yi Feng

to the Liang’s sworn brothers. The recount will be included at the beginning of Chapter Eleven.

Related

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Ten (The Fight At The End)

Qin Song was a naughty kid. He loved to play pranks and wasn't scared of heaven or earth. Fighting was one of his favourite pastimes.

Chen Yi Feng was from a military family. Fighting was his forte. Each of his punches and kicks were precise and deadly.

Qin Song and Chen Yi Feng fought each other like how King Arthur would fight Lancelot over Guinevere, gloves were all off. Whatever wasn't nailed in the room Qin Song and Chen Yi Feng used it as weapons to take out their enemy. By the time Han Ting Ting came back to the room with Commander Zhang's guards to stop the fight, it was too late... the room was demolished.

Qin Song grabbed a chair and aimed it at Chen Yi Feng. Chen Yi Feng used his wrists to deflect the chair. Qin Song grabbed another chair, Chen Yi Feng moved closer to the door and Qin Song threw the chair at the door. At that moment Han Ting Ting stood at the door and the chair would have hit her face if Li Wei Ran didn't pull her out of the way in time. The chair flew out the room, downstairs and got caught on a hanging chandelier.

Unfortunately for Commander Zhang's guests that were minding their own business having breakfast at the dining table had to give their vocal chords a workout. The chandelier that made contact with the chair was hung directly above the dining table and dozens of the chandelier's crystal glasses fell onto the heads of Commander Zhang's guests. The guests shrieked and ran for their lives.

Li Wei Ran attempted to enter the war zone but the rivals inside wouldn't let him in. In the end a troop of Commander Zhang's soldiers were called in to pull Qin Song and Chen Yi Feng apart.

The room took the biggest hit like a freak tornado came for a visit. Windows and mirrors were smashed, walls were dented and wardrobes collapsed. Nothing was left standing. The demolished room would have broken the hearts of the room's architect and interior designer.

Chen Yi Feng was breathing heavily. He pulled down his shirt sleeves that were folded up before the fight broke out. Apart from the two surprise punches to his face, he didn't have another injury on his body.

Qin Song's handsome face took a beating too. His left wrist was swollen. Mrs Zhang senior was startled and worried for her youngest grandson and didn't stop directing her other grandson Li Wei Ran who was supporting Qin Song's arm to be gentle.

'Wei Ran, be gentle! Be careful you don't hurt Song Song's wrist,' Mrs Zhang senior advised.

Commander Zhang strode into the room with his hands folded behind his back. He wasn't happy his guests were attacked by crystal glasses under his watch. 'Who made the first move?'

Qin Song used the towel handed to him to wipe the blood off the corner of his mouth. Adrenaline was still pumped through his hot blood. 'Granddad, it was me.'

Chen Yi Feng stared at Qin Song and laughed coldly. Chen Yi Feng opened his mouth but Han Ting Ting ran to Chen Yi Feng and pulled his arm.

'It wasn't what you...' Han Ting Ting said.

'Ah!' Qin Song cried out.

Qin Song grabbed his left arm that was injured not long ago and slid to the floor. It scared everyone in the room. Ting Ting rushed to Qin Song's side. He used the opportunity to bite her earlobe and to whisper into her ear. 'Honey, don't say anything. Go escort Chen Yi Feng to the door and let him leave.'

Song Song was his family's darling. It wasn't convenient for his family to scold Song Song for giving them a scare in front of the guests. But Han Ting Ting knew that his family were heartbroken seeing him injured right under their noses. If Song Song and Chen Yi Feng were fighting over business then it wasn't an issue. But if everyone knew that they were fighting over a misunderstanding about her bruised cheek then her parents would find out... her dad would go ballistic and a scarier fight would break loose.

Chen Yi Feng saw through Qin Song's attitude and understood what happened.

Chen Yi Feng made eye contact with Commander Zhang and apologised. 'Today I was out of line. I'll come back another time to accept my punishment.'

Commander Zhang figured out why Song Song and Chen Yi Feng couldn't get along. Commander Zhang pitied Chen Yi Feng. Commander Zhang patted Chen Yi Feng but didn't say a word.

Zhang Pu and Zhang Yu escorted a doctor to examine Song Song who was still pretending his left arm was in pain. In the mist of the chaos Han Ting Ting pushed Chen Yi Feng out the door like Song Song asked her to do. Yesterday everyone found out their Ting Ting were neighbouring friends with Chen Yi Feng so no one found it strange that she escorted him outside. Especially Song Song's parents who thought their daughter-in-law excelled at her duties as a hostess.

At the allocated parking area, Han Ting Ting jumped into Song Song's car and turned on the ignition. She drove alongside Chen Yi Feng whose strides were as fast as her driving. She wound down the window and waved Chen Yi Feng to the car. 'Get in, I'll take you where you want to go.'

Chen Yi Feng's right fingers were swollen and wrapped in a towel. He couldn't drive so he used his left hand to open the car and accepted a lift from Han Ting Ting. He couldn't help but smile in disbelief at the sight of her in the driver's seat.

'What's wrong? Why are you staring at me?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'When did you become a steady driver?' Chen Yi Feng asked.

Chen Yi Feng couldn't believe the Han Ting Ting that was manoeuvring the steering wheel well was the same Han Ting Ting that used to clutch the steering wheel and was scared to make turns. He thought it was true that no one could predict the future.

'Ah... because Song Song's left arm was injured recently. I was forced to learn how to drive properly,' Han Ting Ting said and smiled. 'It took after crashing a few of Song Song's cars for me to get the hang of driving.'

Chen Yi Feng brooded and his eyes looked like it was taken back to the distant past. 'If I knew back then, I wouldn't have bothered trying to teach you to drive.'

Chen Yi Feng felt regretful. He regretted he didn't acknowledge his heart until it was too late.

Han Ting Ting was reflecting on her heart. She felt the biggest difference between Chen Yi Feng and Song Song was how the time she knew each of them was spent. During the shorter time she'd known Song Song, they've leaned on one another for support, teased and fought with each other, they made up after fighting and loved each other. Whereas the years alongside Chen Yi Feng she spent it looking at him at a distance.

It didn't matter how Chen Yi Feng taught her how to drive, she couldn't get over her own fears. But Song Song gave her all his car keys. Each time she crashed, he'd give her a new car key and waited patiently for her to get over the fear of crashing.

Han Ting Ting knew it was selfish of her to be grateful nothing happened between her and Chen Yi Feng. She was happy with Song Song and also had Chen Yi Feng as an older brother figure in her life, watching over her.

'Concentrate on driving!' Chen Yi Feng said and his body broke out in a cold sweat.

Chen Yi Feng's heart calmed a little and he looked over at Han Ting Ting. 'Are you worrying about Qin Song?'

'The cast on Song Song's left arm was removed just last week,' Han Ting Ting said.

'Is that so?' Chen Yi Feng asked. He rubbed his swollen face. 'I couldn't tell.'

Chen Yi Feng removed the towel wrapped around his right hand, it was so swollen that he couldn't close his right hand.

'Do you want me to take you to the hospital to check out your hand injury?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'It's nothing. You...' Chen Yi Feng said and pointed at her cheek. 'If your vision is blurry you need to tell me straight away. My life is in your hands.'

Han Ting Ting explained to Chen Yi Feng what happened last night to cause her cheek to bruise. But she left out the reason why Song Song wanted to take a picture of them in bed together.

It didn't take long for Chen Yi Feng to guessed why. 'Little Qin Song is more

childish than I imagined.'

'Song Song is a good person!' Han Ting Ting said. 'You... you didn't wait for me to finish my explanation and jumped to conclusions.'

Han Ting Ting thought that Chen Yi Feng was more hot blooded than Song Song. Who would pick a fight on behalf of someone else before understanding what happened?

Chen Yi Feng closed his eyes, draped an arm over his forehead and sighed. 'Girls... what's the point of raising girls when they'll desert you the moment they're married? I'm worried in the future Dong Dong will love someone the way you love Song Song, I'll die of frustration that I sacrificed everything to raise my daughter for someone else to receive the benefits of my labour.'

'Hey, it was your fault for misunderstanding Song Song. Song Song didn't start the fight,' Han Ting Ting said.

Chen Yi Feng closed his eyes to rest. 'It doesn't matter. It was an excuse I was waiting for. I wanted to beat him up long ago.'

'Because of me?' Han Ting Ting asked softly.

Chen Yi Feng opened his eyes and stared at Han Ting Ting who wasn't his timid little Ting Ting anymore. He closed his eyes. 'Concentrate on driving!'

End of Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

On the first day back at work after the Christmas break, Li Wei Ran re-enacted the fighting sequence between their sixth brother and Chen Yi Feng at Liang's company during a morning meeting.

Ji Nan was the most enthusiastic of the Liang's sworn brothers. 'Sixth brother you pretend your Chen Yi Feng and attack me. I'll pretend to be you and defend.'

Rong Yan rubbed his tears of laughter from his eyes. 'Forth brother if you pretend to be sixth brother then you'll be beaten pitifully.'

‘Rong Yan, you bastard! It was a tie!’ Qin Song denied.

Apart from Qin Song, everyone was suspicious whether the fight was a draw. Big boss was the only one out of those who were suspicious that have fought one on one with Qin Song. They all turned to silently ask big boss if he reckon Qin Song was telling the truth.

Big boss put the newspaper in his hands down. He lifted Qin Song’s left arm. ‘Um, it was kind of Chen Yi Feng to go easy on sixth brother to keep sixth brother’s reputation intact.’

Qin Song quietly fumed.

‘Is Chen Yi Feng going to sign with sixth brother’s uncles?’ Chen Yu Bai asked.

Li Wei Ran nodded his head and looked at big boss. ‘First brother, isn’t this the time for you to show your cards? The investment amount to sixth brother’s uncles is a substantial amount but for Chen Yi Feng it’s petty cash. Why is he making life hard for sixth brother?’

Big boss was about to reply when Qin Song jumped up. ‘No one gets to interfere. This is between me and him.’

‘You reckon you can beat him on a one on one fight?’ Rong Yan asked.

‘He’s messing with me. Why can’t I find someone to mess with him?’ Qin Song said. ‘You guys stand back and wait to see my victory. I’ll make mincemeat out of him. He won’t be able to chew and swallow for a long time.’

‘What about your little wife? Do you need me to teach you some new tricks?’ Rong Yan asked.

Qin Song was insulted and kept silent. His sworn brothers all gave him the same concerned look.

Chen Yu Bai had a knife in his hand and sliced a little egg in half. ‘Sixth brother, I’ll teach you the only trick you need.’

Chen Yu Bai popped half of the hot little egg in his mouth. ‘What you can eat, hurry up and eat it up to satisfy your stomach. The earlier you eat it up the earlier you’ll be at peace.’

Chen Yu Bai pushed the bridge of his glasses up and gave sixth brother a sly

smile. Qin Song was in a daze for a while before there was a bright gleam in his eyes.

Whilst driving home, dirty thoughts consumed Qin Song's head.

'What would the white 'little country bun' taste like?' Qin Song's animal drive asked.

'Where's the best place to start eating? How many times can the bun be eaten? Should he ask for leave tomorrow? Mmm, at least he should ask her preschool to let her take leave tomorrow...' Qin Song's asked his animal drive.

Qin Song's dirty thoughts didn't hinder him from returning home in one piece. He opened the door and heard his 'little country bun' sobbing.

Qin Song was startled and didn't take his shoes off before running to Ting Ting. 'Did the hospital called? What's wrong with my dad?'

Han Ting Ting was shaken by Song Song back and forth until she became dizzy. 'No one called... did something happened to dad?'

Qin Song's heart that jumped up to his throat slowly jumped down to its resting place. His dad had a second surgery two days ago. The results of the second surgery were still unknown but he couldn't shake off the bad feeling in his heart and it scared him.

Qin Song went to the shoe rack to change out of his shoes. Whilst he was changing he poked his head into the living room. 'Honey, what happened? Why are you crying?'

Han Ting Ting sobbed louder. 'Song Song... I'm in big trouble.'

Qin Song changed into his slippers and went to hug Ting Ting on the sofa. 'How big? Tell me about it, if it can make me cry I'll give you a reward.'

'Song Song, look,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting opened the red fabric she held in her hand. On top of the fabric were broken pieces of a jade bracelet.

'Qin Sang hand delivered it to me. She said she found it broken at granddad's

mansion. She didn't tell anyone and came today to give it to me,' Han Ting Ting explained.

Qin Song thought the jade pieces looked familiar. 'Is it the green jade bracelet my mum gave you?'

Han Ting Ting wiped her tears and nodded her head. Zhang Yu had handed the green jade bracelet down to her on her wedding day. Usually she kept it safe in a draw at home. She only took it out to wear at important functions. On Christmas Day she wore it to Song Song's granddad's mansion. That day because Song Song and Chen Yi Feng's fight she didn't know the bracelet was lost.

'Is it that easy to break?' Qin Song asked. He took a piece and knocked it against the table. He saw Ting Ting wiping her eyes and gave her a sly smile. He pointed at his lips. 'Give me a kiss and I'll buy you a replacement.'

Han Ting Ting was in no mood for Song Song's teasing. She pushed his face that was leaning into her away.

'You're not going to listen to me?' Qin Song said teasingly. 'I'm going to tell mum. I'll tell her that you broke the family's precious jade that was handed down from mother to daughter-in-law for centuries.'

Han Ting Ting couldn't believe Song Song would tell his mum. She covered her face and sobbed. He tried to pull her hands away but she grabbed a cushion to hug and sob louder.

'Hey, I was teasing. Honey, don't cry anymore,' Qin Song consoled.

Qin Song lifted Ting Ting onto his lap. 'Ting Bao, be good. Don't cry. I was teasing. I'll think of a way to hide it. No one will find out. Don't cry anymore.'

Han Ting Ting grabbed Song Song's shirt and stared at him suspiciously. 'You're not lying to me?'

Qin Song put his hand over his heart. 'I promise!'

'Um,' Han Ting Ting said.

'Now are you going to kiss me?' Qin Song asked.

'Stay away, you trickster!' Han Ting Ting said.

A few days later the trickster became Han Ting Ting's hero. Song Song came home with a pair replica vintage clear green jade bracelet to the one that was given to her on her wedding day. She inspected the new bracelets all night. 'Song Song, was it expensive?'

Qin Song was playing on the wii and didn't bother to turn around to face Ting Ting. 'It was one hundred for the pair.'

Han Ting Ting's eyes widened. 'They're fake?'

'Um,' Qin Song said. He turned around briefly to reassure Ting Ting. 'Honey, you can wear them comfortably. Except for jade specialists, no one else will know if they're real or not.'

Han Ting Ting didn't hesitate to accept the bracelets. Since they were fakes she wore them on her wrist every day.

New Year's Eve arrived and Han Ting Ting and Song Song were going to her parents' home to celebrate.

In the kitchen of the Han household Ting's mum praised that her daughter's bracelets were beautiful.

Han Ting Ting took one bracelet off and gave it to her mum.

'No need,' Ting's mum declined and waved her hands. 'I don't even want to dream about wearing something that expensive. Ting Bao, it looks pretty on you. Make sure you take care of it.'

'Mum, it's not expensive,' Han Ting Ting happily explained. 'It looks like real jade but it's a fake.'

Ting's mum heard that it was a fake and happily accepted it from Han Ting Ting. The mother and daughter pair gossiped and laughed animatedly together. After Ting's dad listened to Song Song's words of encouragement the Han household lived a more peaceful life. Ting's dad still worked hard but his duties were lighter, he received bonuses that were rightfully his and before New Year's Eve he was also honoured with a medal for bravery. Song Song secretly told her that her dad was going to have another promotion at the beginning of the New

Year.

Ting's mum and Han Ting Ting didn't need Ting's dad to be rich and successful. They were happy to know that his achievements were acknowledged and his abilities were used to the fullest.

'Song Song is a good man. He treats your father and me like he does his own parents. We're lucky to have him as a son-in-law,' Ting's mum praised. 'There are plenty of rich playboys out there but it's rare to find a man who's rich like Song Song who doesn't play around behind his wife's back.'

Han Ting Ting was arranging the buns. 'Mum, how do you know he's a good man and isn't a player? In front of you he pretends to be obedient. But at home in front of me he's childish and likes to hide Putt Putt.'

Ting's mum gave her daughter a dirty look. She knew who gave Putt Putt to her daughter. 'The right thing to do is to get rid of it.'

'Mum...' Han Ting Ting sulked.

'Ahem... Ting Bao... are you and Song Song... ahem... purposely avoiding having kids? It's near your six month anniversary but you're not pregnant. If the two of you aren't using protection then both of you should have a health check. There is good medicine these days to help... ahem... do you get what I'm saying?' Ting's mum said.

Han Ting Ting didn't know where to hide her embarrassed face. She couldn't answer any of her mum's questions. She and Song Song have been married nearly for half a year. It was normal for her parents to discuss the issue of having kids with her.

Han Ting Ting and Song Song were enjoying their honeymoon period... but if she gave birth to their child it would make their family of two become a warm family of three. Song Song's so childish he'd hog their child's toys and would be jealous of their child. On Christmas Day Song Song asked her if she'd love their child more than him and forget about him... he must have had thoughts of expanding their family back then. But thinking about having kids wouldn't get her pregnant... that thought made her whole body hot. She fled the kitchen and used the excuse of getting water to drink. Outside in front of the water mill she covered her face and laughed like a fool.

Qin Song held New Year gifts in both of his hands. He arrived at his in-laws house and saw his 'little country bun' covering her face and laughing like a fool. He put the gifts on the ground then strode to Ting Ting. He hugged her tight and lifted her off the ground. He bit her lips and kissed her.

Ting's mum heard a muffled cry and rushed outside. She saw her son-in-law spinning her daughter around and kissing her. She was happy her daughter married someone who loved her as much as she loved her daughter. She quietly went back to the kitchen.

'You finish work early today?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Han Ting Ting's feet were allowed to touch the ground but she couldn't get rid of her blush.

Qin Song saw her pink cheeks and couldn't help but give her another kiss. 'Nothing strange about it. Today is New Year's Eve.'

'My dad said he's working overtime tonight. He'd be home at eight for dinner,' Han Ting Ting said. She wrapped her arms around Song Song's neck and smiled. 'Song Song, are you hungry? I'll scoop you a bowl of soup if you're hungry.'

Qin Song glanced at the kitchen and didn't see anyone coming out. He pressed his cheek to Ting Ting's cheek and blew hot air into her ear. 'Honey, it's you I want to eat.'

Han Ting Ting's ear tingled and the tingle flowed down her body. She leaned her head on his shoulder and too shy to say anything.

New Year's Eve dinner at the Han household was simple and filled with two pairs of lovers. Fire crackers were heard from outside. Four people sat around one round table and on the table were steaming hot dishes. The atmosphere around them was sweet and peaceful.

Ting's dad loved to drink with his son-in-law. They drank many shots of alcohol. Song Song was tipsy enough to cheer his shot toward Ting's mum instead of Ting's dad.

'Ancient hubby, take it easy. Song Song has to drive later,' Ting's mum advised.

Ting's dad laughed loudly and scratched his head. 'Ting Ting knows how to

drive too.'

Qin Song was surprised and looked at his wife. 'Aren't we sleeping here tonight?'

'Mum said we can leave after dinner. We need to head over to your parents' house. Besides, you're not used to sleeping here. We can sleep over at your parents' house,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting thought that Qin Yun's health was deteriorating by the day. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day only came once a year, it was better for her and Song Song to be beside Qin Yun.

Qin Song wasn't fond of his dad's side of the family. But like Ting Ting, he wanted to spend New Year's Eve and New Year's Day with his dad. His mood lifted and he drank another shot with his dad-in-law.

The Qin's household was noisy and everyone surrounded Qin Yun to chat. Qin Yun was shocked to see Song Song and Ting Ting holding hands at the front door.

'Come over here and sit,' Qin Yun said and waved Song Song and Ting Ting over.

'Everyone was just mentioning the two of you,' Zhang Yu said.

'Talking bad about me?' Qin Song asked teasingly.

'What talking bad?' One of Qin Song's cousins asked. She put down the newspaper. 'We were commending you on your love for your beautiful wife that you didn't mind burning one hundred thousand dollars. Ting Ting, show us your pair of jade bracelets.'

Qin Song opened the newspaper. There was a page dedicated to news about him. He had asked an assistant to bid on a pair of jade bracelets at an auction. There were two side shots. One was a close up of the bracelets sold at the auction. The other one was a blurred photo of Ting Ting at the supermarkets lifting a price tag and the bracelets she wore on her wrists were identical to the ones sold at the auction.

Qin Song cursed Chen Yun! How did Chen Yun dig up the news about him

buying the jade bracelets for Ting Ting? He wasn't happy having his married life being exploited for publicity.

'Wow, it's beautiful!' One of Qin Song's cousins said.

Han Ting Ting's wrist was pulled about by everyone from the Qin household. She felt a cold sweat on her back. She racked her head about how she was going to open her mouth to ask her mum to give back the other jade bracelet.

Qin Yun waited until the commotion calmed down and grilled Song Song and Ting Ting. 'Why did you two decide to come over here? Aren't you two supposed to be at Ting Ting's parents' house tonight?'

'I brought Ting Ting here to demand a red packet from you and mum,' Qin Song joked. He showed off the red packet he and Ting Ting received from her parents. 'Ting Ting's parents were generous.'

Zhang Yu wanted to grab the red packet in her son's hand but he hid it behind his back too quick.

Qin Song put out an empty palm in front of his parents. 'I wish both of you a happy New Year! May everything go both your ways. Hurry up and cough up the red packet both of you owe me and Ting Ting.'

Qin Song's childish act made everyone burst into laughter.

Qin Yun took out three red packets from the pile of red packets reserved for his nephews and nieces. He gave Song Song one red packet and two red packets to Ting Ting. 'Have a Happy New Year! May everything go both your ways too. I hope the year will bring peace and happiness to you both.'

'What? It's not fair Ting Ting gets two and I only get one,' Qin Song protested.

'Of course Ting Ting gets two. One for her and one for the baby in her tummy,' One of Qin Song's cousin said.

Song Song knew that there was no baby in Ting Ting's tummy but he couldn't tell everyone in the room the truth. He kept smiling at her. She didn't have thick skin like him. Being surrounded by his relatives giving her sly smiles wasn't what she expected. She accepted the two red packets with shaky hands. She didn't know if she should return one later to his parents or save it for their future child.

‘The two red packets, one for my favourite daughter-in-law and one for your wife,’ Qin Yun teased. ‘Ting Ting has excelled at both roles. I hope the next New Year, Ting Ting can receive three red packets.’

Han Ting Ting and Song Song went upstairs to sleep in his old room. ‘Why did you tell me the bracelets were fakes? I was too scared to say anything before. It was lucky mum didn’t ask otherwise I couldn’t answer her.’

‘I told you a pair was one hundred. I didn’t say one hundred dollars. It was you that said it was fake,’ Qin Song said and shrugged his shoulders. ‘I didn’t expect it would be reported on the news.’

Han Ting Ting fiddled with the bracelet and was lost in her thoughts to say anything else.

Qin Song took no notice of the bracelet. It was the bracelet’s owner that he took notice of. He hugged her and whispered in her ear. ‘If you like the bracelet then wear it. I don’t care how expensive it is because it can’t compare to your happiness.’

Han Ting Ting tilted her head to the side and smiled. ‘Song Song, your tongue is getting sweeter by the day.’

‘Um,’ Qin Song admitted. ‘That’s because I love my wife more each day.’

Qin Song’s fingers that were slowly caressing Han Ting Ting’s wrist, carried an indescribable feeling that gave them a sense of strangeness and longing. That feeling was like a strand of silk slowly tying them tightly together so that they couldn’t be separated.

‘The jade bracelet contains life essence, if it belongs to you then it won’t be lost. You should wear it, if it isn’t lost we’ll keep it for the next generation. Heirlooms from our generation or from previous generations passed down to future generations, it’s the same concept,’ Qin Song whispered.

Qin Song kissed Ting Ting from the ear down to the hollow of her neck and down her shoulders.

Han Ting Ting didn’t know when Song Song had unbuttoned three buttons of her collared shirt the colour of lotus pink. The collar of her shirt was pulled down to her chest.

The combination of Ting Ting's pink shirt and her smooth skin was more than alluring, it was a deadly enchantment. Qin Song suckled her snow white shoulder. His breath was hot and his voice was husky. 'Honey, do you want three red packets?'

Han Ting Ting closed her eyes and rested on Song Song's chest, her soul was gravitated toward his soul and her voice trembled. 'Um...'

Han Ting Ting's whole body felt light, she took a deep breath and Song Song carried her in his arms. She shyly looked at him, her arms wrapped around his neck and her head leaned against his heart. She listened to his strong heart beats and she slowly closed her eyes.

The grandfather clock downstairs chimed twelves times, outside firecrackers exploded and shook the earth, the sky seemed torn and the brilliant spots of the fireworks adorned the sky.

The welcoming of the New Year was a boisterous celebration. But Han Ting Ting only clearly heard Song Song's voice softly whispering 'Ting Bao, I love you.' Only a few seconds ago her body felt very uncomfortable then it quickly shifted to intense vibrations. She was overwhelmed by the effect of her body trembling and his gentleness. It was his way of showing he loved her.

The most beautiful flower bloomed throughout the atmosphere...

The passionate spring scent that pervaded the room was slowly melting...

Qin Song inserted his fingers between Ting Ting's fingers, their ten fingers interlocked and he slowly caressed the cool jade bracelet on her wrist.

A long time later...

'Honey...' Qin Song whispered. His body was still pressed against Ting Ting's body. 'I'm sorry. I've hurt you.' A while later he withdrew. He gently exhaled a breath. 'Next time it won't hurt like this.'

'Song Song... after we met you've never?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Earlier Song Song said that his legs and arms ached and Han Ting Ting wanted to ask if since he met her if he'd been with other women.

'Um,' Qin Song said. 'In the past I fought over girls with Li Wei Ran only to play

around, I never treated it as serious. Later after the situation with Qin Sang... I felt everything was bland and meaningless.'

Han Ting Ting was silent a while. 'Mmm... I should thank her.'

Song Song used an arm to prop his body up and 'hovered' over Han Ting Ting's body. His eyes were filled with happiness and stared at her lovingly. His intense gaze made her blush, she covered his eyes with her hand but she couldn't hide her smile.

The white satin curtains flapped against the window frame. The brilliant spots of the fireworks crept through the slightly opened window. Downstairs were sounds of laughter. Qin Song laid on a soft fragrant bed, throughout the years he never thought there would be a year when he'd welcome the New Year with his dad's side of the family and his heart would be filled with warmth until he also spent it with Ting Ting.

When the earth was at peace...

Chen Yu Bai put his phone down on the table. He climbed into bed and hugged his wife under the bed sheet.

An Xiao Li had suffered under her husband all last night until she was almost unconscious. She leaned against his chest and squint her eyes. 'Who was it?'

'Sixth brother,' Chen Yu Bai said.

'Why did he call you at this late hour?' An Xiao Li asked.

Chen Yu Bai laughed softly, his fingers that were caressing his wife's neck slowly slid down. 'Sixth brother opened a New Year present, he was overwhelmed and couldn't sleep so he called me to tell me the good news.'

An Xiao Li fully opened her eyes. 'What present made him that excited?'

Chen Yu Bai felt rejuvenized. He silently wrapped his wife's leg around his waist and pressed their bodies together. He kissed her and laughed softly. 'Let's open a New Year present too and we'll know why.'

Chen Yu Bai never seen such a foolish kiddo like sixth brother. Sixth brother only got to eat meat once but was overwhelmed that he couldn't sleep and hid in the bathroom and sat on the toilet seat to announce it to the world.

Chen Yu Bai got to eat meat several times a day, for him each day was like a happy New Year.

Sixth brother Qin Song was indeed a love fool!

On the first day of the New Year...

Qin Song for the first time woke up before his phone alarm and didn't need anyone to wake him up either. He opened his eyes and searched for Ting Ting. Her back was leaning against his chest and the white curve of the back of her neck was close to his lips. He couldn't hold back his urge and kissed the back of her neck.

Last night Han Ting Ting slept deeply. The morning sunlight and the ticklish sensation on the back of her neck woke her up. The moment she realised Song Song was kissing her, her body softened and she didn't have enough energy left to even lift a finger.

One of Han Ting Ting's dreams was that each morning she'd be woken up by a gentle kiss from the man that she loved.

Qin Song kissed the back of Ting Ting's neck until she woke up. Then he kissed her lips. 'I'll carry you to the shower.'

Han Ting Ting shook her head. 'I'll go on my own.'

'Honey, you can still walk?' Qin Song asked suspiciously.

Qin Song's hand slid down Ting Ting's stomach.

'Hey... don't be like that,' Han Ting Ting said. She twisted her aching body to stop Song Song's hand from being too active. She sat up and held the bed sheet over her naked chest. 'Song Song don't look. I want to go shower.'

Qin Song smiled, reached for his night shirt from the floor and gave it to Ting Ting.

Han Ting Ting showered and came back to the bedroom and saw Song Song wore his loose night pants. He was pacing up and down the room talking on the phone and his good mood was evident on his face.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting returned to the bedroom and immediately ended the call. He strode to her and hugged her tight. 'Honey!'

'Um?' Han Ting Ting asked.

Han Ting Ting blushed. She was Song Song's legitimate wife and lover.

'Was last night good for you?' Qin Song asked.

Did Song Song need to ask such an embarrassing question? Han Ting Ting's blush flowed to the rest of her body. 'I don't know... what's good and what's not good? Song Song go shower or it'll be night time soon.'

Qin Song hugged Ting Ting tighter. He wasn't going to let her go until she understood his question. 'Last night was my performance good?'

Han Ting Ting held Song Song's face to push him back because she didn't want to answer. Song Song almost stumbled back so he held her waist tighter until their bodies were glued to each other.

Qin Song the night beast who got to eat meat last night was hungry for more meat. 'Why don't we re-enact last night for a bit? Honey, look at you, you've almost forgotten about last night.'

Han Ting Ting's legs suddenly became jelly. 'I don't want to. Song Song, you were good, really good.'

'Good to what extent?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song pressed Ting Ting's body onto the bed. He bit her soft chest through the white bath towel.

'Ah!' Han Ting Ting cried out.

Qin Song took Ting Ting's cry as her desire to proceed. His animal drive flooded his body. He lowered his body but she pushed him away.

'Song Song!' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting escaped from under Song Song's body. She wrapped the bed sheet around her body. Then she noticed spots of blood in the middle of the white bed. Around the spots of blood were fluid stains. 'Song Song, what do we do now?'

Qin Song thought for a bit, smiled happily, hugged Ting Ting and kissed her. 'Honey, don't worry. I'll take care of it.'

Ting Ting was stiff with worry over the state of the mattress. Qin Song loosened his hold around her waist. He postponed turning his night beast into a day beast too. He was in love with her and happy before last night but after last night he felt even happier, because he possessed both her body and soul.

'Honey!' Qin Song said. 'I'm really happy!'

Qin Song felt happy Ting Ting waited for him to come find her and he was happy that he waited for her to be his.

Qin Song was happy that he met Ting Ting when it wasn't too late.

Many years later Qin Song was happy they still got to be beside each other each day.

What would never change for Qin Song was that he was happy Ting Ting was in his life!

End of Chapter Eleven

Related

part 1

Chapter Twelve (Part 1)

On the second day of the New Year, Qin Song returned to work. His workload at Liang's company was steady because he'd finish most of the important paperwork at the end of last year. Whilst his workload at Qin's company was heavy.

During the time Qin Song was busy, his uncles wanted to hold an impromptu shareholders' meeting. Qin Yun was able to control the outcome of votes during his decades as head of Qin's company. But Qin Yun's supporters changed boats after Qin Yun's hospitalization. Qin Song's uncles submitted a request to the Board of Directors to hold a shareholders' meeting to cast votes on who should be the head of Qin's company.

Ji Nan had compiled reports on Qin Song's uncle's scandals and shady business deals under the table. Qin Song read the reports and felt disgusted and disappointed in them. Afterward he stood by the window, took a deep breath and looked at the sky. He thought about his next course of action, whether it was worth exploiting his uncles' secrets to keep his position at Qin's company... but it'd be at the expense of cutting ties with his uncles... and it'd affect his dad's fragile health.

Ji Nan joined the reports on the table to make a puzzle picture. 'Song Song, do you want to teach them a lesson? They have too many weaknesses to choose from, it'd be easy to take them down.'

'No,' Qin Song declined. 'If I use dirty methods to threaten them into backing down then I'm lowering my own self-worth to their level. Even if I threatened them in the future they have more motivation to dispose me.'

'Oh,' Ji Nan said then stacked the reports to one side and focused on eating her toast.

'This will be the first and last time they try to revolt. I'll make them understand that whether it's me or my dad, it's better for them not to stir the pot,' Qin Song said coldly as the dark clouds in the sky.

The approved shareholders' meeting was held, Qin Song walked into the meeting with half of the people in the room looking at him like he should prepare to lose his position as head of Qin's company.

'Let's cast our votes,' Qin Song's third uncle suggested.

Qin Song's third uncle sat on the right of Qin Song. Everyone heartily agreed with his uncle's suggestion. No one bothered to ask Qin Song who was sitting at the head of the shareholders' meeting venue for his opinion.

'Why do we need to vote?' Qin Song asked coldly. 'I've fulfilled all my duties as head of Qin's company. Unless, is there someone in this room who's dissatisfied with my performance?'

Many of the people in the room were envious of Qin Song. They wanted to use the excuse that Qin Song had a conflict of interest to dispose him. That Qin Song wasn't fit to be head of Qin's company whilst being a major stakeholder at Liang's company, hence he wouldn't always put Qin's company interest first and breach a fiduciary duty.

'I've read all the official complaints that were brought to the attention of my father,' Qin Song said. He gestured for his two trusted assistants to put them on the table and laughed coldly. 'I admit what was written sounded convincing.'

Qin Song was angrier that they disturbed his dad's recovery than the rubbish they wrote. They informed his dad that he was unfit to be the head of Qin's company because he prioritised Liang's company over Qin's company.

The people involved in sneaking behind Qin Song's back to double cross him couldn't believe their plan was found out by Qin Song. Their complexions all paled.

'The concerns everyone raised wasn't unreasonable. It's true that Liang's company is a strong competitor and poses a threat to Qin's company,' Qin Song said. He leaned back in his chair and enjoyed seeing his uncles squirm. 'I've decided to agree to have another third party investor. I'm not happy that it'd affect our percentage ownership of Qin's company. But I'm going to think of it as a free practical lesson to ease the concerns of my uncles whom are dear to my

heart and whom I respect as my elders.'

Qin Song's uncles wiped their sweaty foreheads. Their plan backfired on them. If their relationship with Chen Yi Feng's company is profitable then Qin Song would receive the credit. If Qin's company was devalued then Qin Song had the ammunition to hold it over their heads because they were the ones that proposed another third party investor. They underestimated how cunning their little nephew was.

'Chen Yi Feng's company offer is average. I suggest we open our options and have a public tender. There'd be plenty of investors keen to make higher biddings than Chen Yi Feng's proposed offer,' Qin Song said. 'I'm grateful to all the support I've received from everyone in this room, it's been fundamental to my personal growth. If I have offended anyone then I'm deeply sorry. We're all family here and I believe that as my elders you all have generous hearts to give me a chance to satisfy your expectations of me as head of Qin's company.'

Qin Song felt he said enough to scare his uncles from planning another mutiny. He stood and bypassed his frozen uncles to leave the room with his two assistants.

Back at Liang's company Rong Yan was digesting Qin Song's recount of the Qin's company shareholders' meeting. 'Mmm. With Chen Yi Feng's abundant resources do you actually think having a tender is a good idea? There won't be many companies that are on par with Chen Yi Feng's company and if they did, I doubt they want to make Chen Yi Feng their enemy.'

'I have someone that can help make the tender competitive,' Qin Song said. He leisurely twirled his pen around his fingers. 'All it takes is one right bait to hook the biggest fish.'

'Is that person trust worthy?' Li Wei Ran asked.

'Of course!' Ji Nan answered before Qin Song.

'Take a look for yourselves,' Ji Nan said. She spread out copies of background checks on Qin's company secret weapon to help lift the biddings. 'Yuan Yi Yi, heiress of her dad's Yuan's company. She's not just a pretty face, her extensive

business credentials in Singapore are impressive. Her business mind is exceptional as her looks.'

The photo of Yuan Yi Yi clipped to documents on the table was a photo of a vivacious young woman in a tight silver dress that highlighted her feminine curves. Her hair was tied back and her long slender legs were appetizing.

'Um, she's alright,' Rong Yan said. His former player mentality kicked in. 'Yuan Yi Yi wants to make connections with Qin Song's company. But I bet she agreed to make an offer because she wanted to meet me.'

'Is that so? Does anyone know Ye Mu's number off the top of their head?' Li Wei Ran asked teasingly and took out his phone ready to dial.

Rong Yan rushed to stall Li Wei Ran from dialling his little beast. 'You didn't let me finish. Even if Yuan Yi Yi was interested in me, for her it'd be nothing more than a fancy dream. I've been reformed long ago. I rather die than jeopardize my happy marriage with Ye Mu than fall for Yuan Yi Yi's seduction!'

The former player Rong Yan was scared his wife would find out about his careless comment that he was temporary knocked into a paranoia abyss by his sworn brothers.

'Sixth brother, you have to think this through carefully. Your share of Qin's company is barely scraping major control. If your share is reduced by a lot then in the future it'd be harder for you to be the main decision maker relating to Qin's company business deals,' Liang Fei Fang advised.

'I didn't offer her any of my shares in Qin's company,' Qin Song said and shrugged his shoulders.

Li Wei Ran was surprised. 'Then what's in it for her to help you? This kind of short term gain is puny, someone with her dad's backing and her own resources wouldn't be interested in offending Chen Yi Feng for crumbs.'

Chen Yu Bai who was quietly looking over documents and drinking coffee had enough of his sworn brothers' slow thought progression. 'Sixth brother promised ten percent of his Liang's company to give to her if she helps him.'

Big boss gritted his teeth. Rong Yan climbed out of his paranoia abyss. Ji Nan cracked her knuckles. Li Wei Ran rolled up his sleeves.

Qin Song quickly walked backward to the door. 'Don't be like that. We're all brothers. Why fight over my tiny parting of Liang's company shares? You guys should be flattered that an attractive and intelligent person like Yuan Yi Yi is interested in Liang's company... Ah! Ting Ting, where are you? Your Song Song needs your help!'

In real life Yuan Yi Yi was more beautiful than what a camera lens could capture.

Yuan Yi Yi arrived in the same district as the Liang's sworn brothers on a cold winter day. But Yuan Yi Yi was dressed in a thin tight black dress, black heels, black sunglasses and a blood red scarf around her neck. Her striking beauty was impossible to miss against the white snowy landscape.

Qin Song was attending a business banquet and had asked one of his assistants to pick Yuan Yi Yi from the airport and drive her to meet him at the banquet venue.

When Qin Song spotted Yuan Yi Yi entering the banquet venue with his assistant, he immediately went to greet her. He put his hand out to shake her hand and gave her a charming smile. 'Miss Yuan, thank you for travelling a long way to meet me.'

Yuan Yi Yi assessed Qin Song from top to bottom for a while. Then she took off her glasses and smiled. Bystanders thought her smile was intoxicating as the strongest alcohol.

'Nice to meet you Mr Qin junior,' Yuan Yi Yi greeted. She shook Qin Song's offered hand. Then she comfortably stood on her toes and held onto his shoulders for their cheeks to meet. Afterward she gave him her best intoxicating smile. 'Mr Qin junior, your reputed handsomeness was indeed not a bluff.'

Qin Song's heart felt the bad kind of discomfort. He was used to being praised for his looks. But the way Yuan Yi Yi praised him was like the way she would inspect a pair of heels at a shoe store and pay any price to own it.

Qin Song escorted Yuan Yi Yi to meet the other guests at the banquet.

Yuan Yi Yi wine and dined the guests at the venue. Her directness, wit and

intelligence impressed the guests. It meant that Qin Song's position as head of Qin's company was going to be cemented.

But Yuan Yi Yi's intense gazes at Qin Song, gave Qin Song the creeps.

'Let's discuss business further another day. It's getting late. Miss Yuan you must be tired too,' Qin Song politely said and forced a smile. 'My assistant will drive you to your hotel.'

'You're not going to personally take me back to my hotel?' Yuan Yi Yi asked.

Yuan Yi Yi pouted her pink lips and leaned closer to Qin Song.

Yuan Yi Yi's fragrance affected Qin Song... not in a good way.

'Achoo!' Qin Song sneezed. 'Sorry, I have allergies. My nose is sensitive to dust.'

'It's nothing,' Yuan Yi Yi said.

Yuan Yi Yi didn't take back her intention to flirt with Qin Song. She stayed standing at a close distance to him.

Qin Song wasn't interested in Yuan Yi Yi one bit. He fled home to be with his loving Ting Ting, who he missed all day.

On the drive back home, Qin Song had many conflicting thoughts.

'How am I going to explain my work relationship with Yuan Yi Yi to my 'little country bun'? I don't want her to worry and at the same time I want her to be a little jealous. That way she'll be more attentive to me and show me more often that she loved me,' Qin Song said to his heart.

Qin Song was happy to be at home. He changed into his slippers and walked into the living room. Ting Ting wasn't there. He went into the kitchen and he saw a half full bowl of soup that was still steaming hot on the dining table. In front of the bowl of soup was a pair of chopsticks that were wet at the tips. It led him to think that her dinner was interrupted.

Qin Song was too busy at the banquet keeping Yuan Yi Yi at bay that he couldn't eat or drink much in case Yuan Yi Yi spiked his food and drink when he

wasn't looking. The aroma of Ting Ting's homemade soup made his taste buds come alive and he picked up Ting Ting's chopsticks to scoop the dumplings inside the bowl of soup into his mouth. He ate happily and felt his good mood could only improve with Ting Ting beside him.

Han Ting Ting heard Qin Song opened the front door from inside the bathroom. The moment she stepped out of the bathroom she saw Song Song at the dining table eating the bowl of soup left on the table.

'Song Song... why are you eating that bowl of soup?' Han Ting Ting asked. 'Didn't you get to eat at the banquet?'

Song Song continued to eat happily and nodded his head. Han Ting Ting wanted to tell him about the owner of that bowl of soup he was eating, but she decided to go back to the bathroom and tell Xiao Tao not to say anything to Song Song about it.

Unexpectedly Xiao Tao couldn't wait any longer for Han Ting Ting to come back to the bathroom to help him wash his hands and walked into the kitchen. 'Miss Han, I washed my hands already.'

'Oh?' Qin Song said in between slurping the soup broth. 'Why is the kid next door here in our home at this time?'

'My parents are at a work function. After dinner my parents will come pick me up,' Xiao Tao said. Before Han Ting Ting could cover his mouth, he went to stand next to Qin Song. 'Miss Han, take a look. Uncle is a dirty man. He didn't wash his hands and is eating my leftovers.'

Han Ting Ting rushed over to Xiao Tao to cover his mouth before he said anything else to make Song Song angrier. 'Tao Tao, do you want me to make you a new bowl of soup?'

Xiao Tao obediently nodded his head. 'Yes please. I'm all clean, not like dirty uncle.'

Qin Song didn't know whether to swallow the soup broth or throw up the soup broth. But he was certain he wanted to wash the little critter's mouth with soap.

Before bed Qin Song brushed his teeth thoroughly countless times. Then he laid in bed with his back facing Ting Ting.

Han Ting Ting was excited all day to show Song Song the nightie and lingerie that Tu Tu delivered through the post. But she was disappointed to see Song Song's back turned to her. She lifted the bed sheet and laid at the edge of the bed too scared to touch him.

But Han Ting Ting couldn't sleep. Her body felt itchy. She scratched her skin under her nightie. No matter how vigorously she scratched it didn't make the itchiness go away.

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting's sleeping style in bed differed that night. Qin Song eyes were open and his body was alert. Han Ting Ting had her eyes closed but couldn't stop scratching.

Han Ting Ting was innocently scratching when all of a sudden Song Song's body rolled on top of her body.

'Honey, are you purposely turning me on?' Qin Song whispered into Ting Ting's hot ear.

Han Ting Ting tried to push Song Song off her to keep scratching. 'My nightie is itchy.'

'Take it off,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song bit Ting Ting's throat. He pulled her nightie down her body. He peeled off her lingerie with his teeth. Then he kissed and licked the red blotches on her body.

Qin Song ate his 'little country bun' until her whole body trembled.

A long time later... Qin Song's nose was itchy. He wanted to sneeze but it was rare for Ting Ting to parade meat on their bed. He didn't want to waste the golden opportunity she gave him otherwise she'd make it harder for him to eat meat later on. He really wanted a second serving of meat but his nose wouldn't cooperate and he sneezed loudly.

The morning after the night Qin Song got a sneeze out of his system and had

many meat servings, Han Ting Ting forced her aching corpse out of bed. But Qin Song pulled his wife's corpse back onto the bed, hugged her sore waist and rubbed his cheek on her thigh. 'Honey, give me a morning kiss.'

Han Ting Ting laughed. She slid her corpse down the bed and grabbed Song Song's face to kiss him. 'Ah! Song Song, your face!'

Qin Song in his sleepy state got out of bed and looked in the mirror to see what Ting Ting's early morning hysteria was about. He was speechless and swollen. His usual handsome face was blown up to the size of a jumbo pig's head.

'Um, it's an allergic reaction. Song Song has been allergic to dust since he was a babe. Ting Ting, you don't need to worry. We're about to head into spring, it's to be expected. Song Song, you need to be more careful,' Qin Song's family doctor said. The doctor was also the Zhang household family doctor too. He took care of Qin Song's health from birth to adulthood and understood Qin Song's body condition well. 'Song Song, during the last two days have you come into contact with flowers or particularly dusty places?'

Qin Song's swollen face, ears, nose, and throat were probed by his family doctor. 'Nope... ah, last night at a banquet I mingled with guests and there was one guest that wore a special fragrance, one sniff and I sneezed.'

'Oh, the fragrance must have given you an allergic reaction. But it wouldn't have triggered a reaction this severe. I think the main culprit is these white cotton threads,' Qin Song's family doctor explained. He used long thin tweezers to remove white cotton threads from Qin Song's throat. 'How did cotton threads from fabrics end up inside your throat?'

Qin Song saw his white 'little country bun' sat beside him turned into a red 'little country bun' after she heard his family doctor asked about the mysterious white cotton threads. 'It could be because of my white cotton night shirt that had loose threads and while I was sleeping I accidentally swallowed the threads.'

Qin Song's family doctor thought Song Song's explanation was abnormal. He saw Ting Ting's blush and understood the white cotton threads Song Song swallowed was Ting Ting's lingerie. 'Ok, it's no big deal. I'll write you a prescription. Make sure you take the medication as directed and in a couple of

days you'll be your old handsome self again.' He turned to look at Ting Ting and gave her a knowing smile. 'Next time be more cautious. Your little monkey husband thinks he has a body of steel but his nose is his kryptonite. The slightest dust will set him off. In the future if he doesn't bully you then don't buy clothing that uses the same fabric as his 'white cotton night shirt' for him to eat.'

Han Ting Ting nodded her head like a naughty kid admitting to their bad deed.

Qin Song who was usually the centre of attention at Qin's company, but his stardom exploded that same day his family doctor prescribed him anti-inflammatory medication. He wore thick shades to Qin's company and walked with dignity to his office. He bypassed all the curious stares but couldn't stop everyone from top to bottom speculating why there were spots of red rashes on his face. The moment he sat on his chair at his work desk, he received a phone call from Li Wei Ran who was at Liang's company. The purpose of Li Wei Ran's call was to make fun of him more than to console him.

Qin Song wasn't productive that day, he spent most of it locked in his office looking at himself in the mirror and missing his usual handsome face.

Qin Song sighed. At least the medication was effective, his swollen face had halved after rubbing the soothing cream prescribed on his face once. He wished there was a prescription to wipe off the spotty red rashes on his face pronto.

Qin Song who loved himself almost as much as he loved his 'little country bun' sat in front of his work laptop and downloaded bank statements to see what purchases Ting Ting bought online.

Qin Song discovered Ting Ting's online purchases were from the same supplier. He went to the supplier's website and was surprised to find the white cotton lingerie Ting Ting bought was a popular sold item.

Qin Song widened his swollen eyes and left negative feedback for that listed online item – 'bad fabric quality, not new condition as advertised, underwear delivered stained, each bra's cup size didn't match, buy at your own risk!'

Qin Song posted his negative feedback and his good mood returned. After venting he ordered for a cup of coffee and started proper work.

Tu Tu who was Ting Ting's online supplier wasn't in a good mood like Qin Song the sabotaging little monkey. Tu Tu immediately logged into QQ. Unfortunately for Tu Tu, Qin Song knew Ting Ting's QQ password and secretly pretended to be Ting Ting online.

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: '???!!!'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'You're the one who sells faulty products, what else did you expect?'

Qin Song laughed happily, his wife's online supplier would be out of business before he headed home to his loving wife.

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: '(view middle finger flipped CGI)'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Hurry up and unlist those butt wipes! Not everyone is as kind as I am, I didn't ask for compensation from you.'

Qin Song sipped his fragrant coffee.

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'It's more like not everyone is like you, buying lingerie to eat!'

Qin Song almost splattered out his fragrant coffee.

Ting Bao Most Obedient: '???!!!'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'What do you expect the fabrics are made of? Goddess feathers? If you know your kryptonite nose is no good then you should have kept your distance from the fabrics, it's your fault for acting out your dirty mind. Hurry up and delete those trashy comments! Otherwise I'll pay you back for the text message incident!'

Qin Song was shocked and he remembered his mum and Ting Ting's online shopping bonding session and his body turned cold.

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'You're Ting Ting's best friend Tu Tu? The one whose dad calls Mao Mao?'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'Hello, Mr Wild Boar Head!'

At Qin's company that day a scream was heard from Qin Song's office.

Yuan Yi Yi heard the scream from a close distance. Qin Song's assistant had escorted her up to his office area. She looked at his office door suspiciously and turned to look back at his assistant. His assistant could only ask Qin Song's secretary to announce her arrival at Qin's company.

'Mr Qin junior, Miss Yuan is here to see you,' Qin Song's secretary said.

There was silence for a while on the other end of the intercom before Qin Song's usual charming voice was heard, as though the scream heard before had nothing to do with him. 'Ask her to come in.'

Yuan Yi Yi entered Qin Song's office and saw him sat straight in his chair and his hands hovered over his keyboard as if he was in the middle of work. He smiled politely at Yuan Yi Yi. 'Good morning Miss Yuan.'

'Did I come too early?' Yuan Yi Yi asked and gave Qin Song her best intoxicating smile.

Yuan Yi Yi wore a black vest over a tight white dress and beneath her long slender legs were nude heels. Any straight man at Qin's company except for Qin Song would have fantasized about bringing Yuan Yi Yi home for the night.

Qin Song's kryptonite nose was quick to react to Yuan Yi Yi's fragrance. He moved his chair back to add more distance between him and the stinky witch.

Yuan Yi Yi didn't miss Qin Song moving back from her. She calmly sat on the guest chair in front of his work desk. 'Why were you screaming before? I heard you from outside your door.'

'Ah... I was doing my morning vocal cord exercise. It helps to relieve body tension,' Qin Song said and glanced at the QQ conversation on his laptop.

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'Hey, don't think I don't stock higher end goods. I'll give your eyes a treat.'

Qin Song discreetly opened the link and saw listings of see through lingerie that would bring out his animal drive if his 'little country bun' was the one modelling them. He looked away from his laptop screen.

'What are you looking at on your laptop?' Yuan Yi Yi asked. She angled her

head to try to see the laptop screen. ‘And why are there spotty red rashes on your face?’

Qin Song coughed and laughed awkwardly. ‘It’s nothing. About what we were discussing at the banquet I think the tender...’

Qin Song wanted to seriously discuss work but he was distracted by another QQ message icon that popped up on his laptop screen.

Qin Song was planning to log out of QQ but couldn’t resist clicking on the last message... his innocent ‘little country bun’s’ face was photo shopped on the lingerie models’ bodies. The caption read – ‘Master you’ve worked hard. Tonight Ting Ting will serve you!’

Qin Song’s body boiled and blood flowed between his legs. He breathed heavily and he shut his laptop.

End of Chapter Twelve (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Twelve (Part 2 of 2)

Over Tu Tu's side, her website went overdrive. Enquiries from her loyal customers asked the same question – 'Shop owner! Why are two zeros suddenly added on the end of all nightwear listings?'

'Sorry, it was a system error. Please select your items, I'll fix all your purchases to their original prices,' Tu Tu replied to her loyal customers.

Tu Tu waited patiently for the biggest fish to take the bait.

But Tu Tu didn't understand why the biggest fish suddenly logged out.

'Unless Qin Song doesn't want Ting Ting to wear those designs...' Tu Tu mumbled. 'Mmm, perhaps Qin Song wanted Ting Ting to wear more erotic designs!'

Tu Tu was inspired. She picked out a model wearing a black sheer strapless bra and underwear bundled with an edible whip. She photo shopped Ting Ting's head onto the model's neck. Tu Tu chuckled to herself and decided to add another zero to nightwear items. It'd teach that kid not to stop Ting Ting from contacting her!

On Qin Song's end his body was still stiff thinking about his 'little country bun' in a skimpy maid outfit. In addition to the spotty red rashes on his face, there was also a bright gleam in his eyes that would have scared Ting Ting whose body was still sore from last night. Ting Ting had to cancel her planned dancing lesson to a finger painting day at her preschool.

Yuan Yi Yi was amused by Qin Song's lusty daze. She waved a hand in front of him. 'Qin Song?'

The stinky witch's fragrance from her wrist made Qin Song sneeze automatically. 'Achoo... sorry.'

Yuan Yi Yi sat back on her chair as if she wasn't offended. She stared at him

with a seductive smile. 'Are you allergic to me?'

Qin Song snapped out of his daze and forced a smile. 'Your fragrance is special, it left an impression on me.'

'I don't mind changing it for you.' Yuan Yi Yi said. She passed Qin Song a tissue. 'It's for your loveable red nose.'

Qin Song pretended he didn't hear Yuan Yi Yi's flirty tone. He took the tissue from her and put it on the table. 'Let's get on with business. Your motivation for investing in Qin's company is it because you're interested in Qin's company long term prospects or are you after Liang's company shares?'

'You're more direct than I thought you would be,' Yuan Yi Yi said.

Qin Song had a hard time suppressing the image of his wife waiting for him at home in a maid's outfit. But he realised he had to get rid of the stinky witch before he could go home and eat his wife. 'Um, I prefer the direct approach for business. That's why I chose you to invest in Qin's company because of your decisiveness, compared to most of the geezers who'll go back on their word at the eleventh hour. It's what we have in common.'

'You're right, I'm an upfront person. I keep my word. That's why I'm going to ask you a direct question...' Yuan Yi Yi said. 'If I told you I don't want any of the incentives written on the investment proposal nor do I need any compensation for any breach term or condition... all I need between us is a mutual understanding, would you be up for it?'

The stinky witch didn't break eye contact with Qin Song and her implied tone was like she was suggesting 'let's have coffee' to him than discussing business. If he didn't need the stinky witch's cooperation then he wouldn't have minded throwing his cold fragrant coffee onto her white dress. Yuan Yi Yi could never look appealing in white as Ting Ting did in the white dress she wore for his thirtieth birthday banquet.

'Your offer is more direct than I thought you would be,' Qin Song said. He lifted his left hand and pointed to the ring on his ring finger and smiled gently as he thought of Ting Ting. 'I love my wife, she's the best thing in my life.'

Yuan Yi Yi's seductive smile didn't disappear. Her eyes showed Qin Song that 'I

like these pair of high heels very much, I want to buy it and take it home to try them on.'

'You're such a romantic,' Yuan Yi Yi said and laughed softly. 'But I was talking about our long term relationship after you have Qin's company nailed under your thumb. What has that got to do with anything about how much you love your wife?'

Qin Song assessed the seriousness of Yuan Yi Yi's expression, he wasn't convinced.

Qin Song had his childish moments but he was blessed with perfect eye sight and intuition. That was why one look at Ting Ting and he knew he found his fated love. It wasn't hard for him to guess Yuan Yi Yi's ulterior motive, whether it was unintentional or deliberate, she was testing the waters to see how he'd react.

Qin Song was silent for a while. 'Miss Yuan, let's talk about more amusing business.'

'What?' Yuan Yi Yi asked.

It was the second time today and in Yuan Yi Yi's life that a man's answer left her confused.

Qin Song's attitude wasn't within Yuan Yi Yi's expectations. She had planned two responses. One response ready for if he reprimanded her for implying a shady relationship between them and the second response ready for if he asked her to elaborate. Instead he acted like he never heard her suggest anything and continued to smile politely at her.

'Ok, let's talk business,' Qin Song said.

Yuan Yi Yi still found the spotty red rashes on Qin Song's young face loveable but she didn't dare to continue to tease him. She recovered her composure and seriously focused on business.

Yuan Yi Yi was mesmerized by Qin Song's intelligence and youthful appeal but her intuition said that it'd be impossible for her to play with him.

At night Han Ting Ting rubbed soothing cream on Song Song's face but she was

suspicious his spotty red rashes didn't disappear as quickly as his doctor said it would.

'Song Song, your face swelled up a bit more,' Han Ting Ting whispered.

She gently rubbed another layer of cream on his face and felt a little depressed.

Qin Song hugged Ting Ting's waist and his hands shamelessly caressed her body. 'I was in the same place with the special fragrance the whole day, I nearly suffocated and fainted today from holding in my breath too long.'

Song Song was using a sulky tone but Han Ting Ting wasn't in a happy mood to console him. 'Was it a female client? She wore heavy perfume?'

'It wasn't heavy. It was a special fragrance and she was a special person too,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song meant special as in a special nuisance! He couldn't wait until the stinky witch flew on her broomstick, far away from his nose.

Qin Song lifted his head for Ting Ting to rub another layer of cream on his face. He closed his eyes and enjoyed her cool touch. In his heart he could see his wife's gentle look as she rubbed the cream on him. He didn't have room to think deeply about what she was asking and answered her questions carelessly.

'Um,' Han Ting Ting whispered.

A special female client? Han Ting Ting finish rubbing the cream on Song Song's face and he locked himself in his study room to work. He'd been busy with work lately, most nights he barely touched his dinner or slept. She understood it was a critical period in his career and never resented him for neglecting her for work. But after she heard him admit that he had a special female client, her heart was no longer at peace.

Han Ting Ting hugged Putt Putt on hers and Song Song's bed, but lately she'd been the only one sleeping on it. She used her coral pink phone to talk to Tu Tu online through QQ to ask for Tu Tu's opinion.

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'Your husband, Mr Wild Boar Head can be childish,

hard to please, has a bad temper but he wouldn't dare cheat on you! He's not new to the business world, there's no new temptation out there that he hadn't seen and tried before he met you. He'd been successful for many years without letting any woman steer him in the wrong direction. Now he's married to you, he loves you and wouldn't do anything to risk losing you. He'd need to be a real Wild Boar Head before he's interested in some hussy who'd never be half your worth!'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'But he said with his own mouth that his female client is special.'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'In this world each person is special, there's no such thing as one person being more special than another person. If the client isn't male then it's a female, to what extent can the client possibly be special?'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'When his doctor asked him why he had an allergic reaction, he said that it was caused by a fragrance a female client wore. Today I saw that his face swelled more and asked him why. He said that for the whole day he was with the same female client that wore a fragrance to make his face swell more. He knows he's allergic to her fragrance then why would he still be close enough to her to make his face swell more? And it was for the whole day!'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'How hateful!'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'That female client made Qin Song allergic but he even praised her that she was special. They must have a good close relationship!'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'I'm still not convinced he's having seconds on the sly. You caused him to swallow a mouthful of cotton threads, his face swelled like a pig's head but he still loves you like crazy.'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'You don't understand his nature. He treats his family with sincerity and love. But he treats outsiders with a cold indifference.'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'Your husband, Mr Wild Boar Head like I said is childish, hard to please and has a bad temper. He couldn't be any more transparent. He wouldn't even dream of cheating on you in his sleep!'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'I'm frustrated and unhappy!'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'I have the best solution to make your frustrations and

unhappiness fly out the window. Just choose between set 1, 2 or 3. Hurry up and buy a set, guaranteed instant relief after one night putting it to good use!

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Um, Mao Mao, you really have heavy taste!'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: '(View flipped table CGI) How many times have I told you, you're not allowed to call me Mao Mao anymore!'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'XXOO is the best way for you to see how much he loves you, if you're not at peace about where his heart lies then choose a set to test him. I'm not asking you to parade yourself in it out in public so you don't have to worry. Besides, he's seen all of you, even if you're missing a bit of fabric here and there it wouldn't matter.'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Will it work?'

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: 'Why wouldn't it work?'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Ok!'

The day Tu Tu's parcel arrived, Han Ting Ting was eating dinner with Qin Yun and Zhang Yu. When she received a phone call from a service clerk of an express delivery service, she was excited, embarrassed and happy all at once knowing Tu Tu's parcel was here.

'Ting Ting,' Zhang Yu called. She was curious why her daughter-in-law was blushing. 'What's wrong?'

'Nothing... Nothing...' Han Ting Ting denied and bit her lip. 'I feel a little hot.'

Han Ting Ting felt dizzy looking at the three different sets and asked Tu Tu to choose a set for her... She hoped it wasn't the sheer black set.

'Where don't you feel well? I'll call Song Song home,' Qin Yun said slowly.

After Qin Yun's second surgery his health was still dipping and it took a lot of energy to speak fast.

'Dad I'm ok. I'm not uncomfortable,' Han Ting Ting said and put down her chopsticks. 'Tonight Song Song has a work banquet. He said he'd be home late. Don't call him, I'll drive home myself.'

Qin Yun laughed softly. 'Zhang Yu, look at our daughter-in-law, she's faring better than you did at her age. In the past we don't even need to mention work banquets, I just need to work overtime or come home a little late, you'll pretend to be sick to scare me.'

Han Ting Ting saw Song Song's parents give secret loving glances. She could see that Qin Yun loved Zhang Yu and prioritized Zhang Yu over work. Zhang Yu was pretending to glare back at Qin Yun but he only had a look of someone who doted on Zhang Yu.

Han Ting Ting was frustrated to see Song Song's parents were deeply in love unlike her who was neglected by her husband. She quickly said farewell and went home.

Han Ting Ting picked up the parcel on the way home and couldn't stop from taking a peek. She was relieved it wasn't the sheer black set.

The moment Han Ting Ting opened the parcel, a sweet gentle aroma filled the car. It was the school set and a pink note was included in the parcel.

'My precious friend, I looked at the three sets and thought this set suits you, hopes your husband, Mr Wild Boar Head will love it. P.S. I had the dry cleaners wash, dry and iron it for you. As long as its use for its correct purpose, there shouldn't be an allergic reaction like last time,' Tu Tu wrote on the note.

Han Ting Ting thought having a best friend that sold an assortment of goods like nightwear was a good thing. She felt cheered up. She took out the school set, it was a school uniform that consisted of a white V-neck crop top with one button in the middle of the chest and a blue short pleated skirt. She asked herself if an ordinary girl like her wore it if it would have the same effect as a model with long legs wearing it... she was happy to delude herself.

Han Ting Ting shyly walked inside her house with Tu Tu's parcel and was surprised to see Song Song was home early. She didn't have time to be happy when her heart squeezed... a fancy pair of heels that didn't belong to her laid on top of Song Song's leather shoes. She could tell the way the shoes leaned on each other that their owners were in a rush to go inside.

Han Ting Ting froze on the spot and quietly cried.

In that moment Qin Song was walking downstairs and he wore home clothes. He was in a comfortable good mood after a shower and his hair was still wet.

‘Honey, you’re home early,’ Qin Song said. Then he noticed Ting Ting crying like the sky had fallen. ‘Why are you crying?’

Qin Song was shocked to see Ting Ting crying so much. He rushed to her side and held her face to see if she was injured anywhere. ‘What happened? Did my parents say something to you?’

Han Ting Ting pushed Qin Song’s hands away from her face. She took two steps back and kicked the heels to him. She cried and stared accusingly at him at the same time.

‘Qin Song!’ Yuan Yi Yi called.

Han Ting Ting saw a woman stepped out of the bedroom downstairs reserved for guests. The woman’s hair was wet and flowed freely to her slim waist, she wore a white towel around her body and walked comfortably toward Qin Song. Han Ting Ting was scared and devastated but the woman smiled an intoxicating smile, it made Han Ting Ting’s whole body shake with disgust.

Qin Song took a deep breath. He hugged Ting Ting who was going to run out the door if he didn’t hold her tight. Then he looked over at the stinky witch. ‘What game are you playing? This is my wife!’

Yuan Yi Yi shrugged her shoulders but it looked like a beautiful butterfly flapping its wings. ‘I wanted to ask if I could borrow one of your wives’ outfits to wear temporarily.’

Qin Song grabbed the outfit Ting Ting held and threw it at the stinky witch.

Yuan Yi Yi stretched out a long white jade arm and caught the outfit. Yuan Yi Yi turned to Qin Song’s little wife who he was protecting inside his chest and Yuan Yi Yi gave the little wife a sly smile. ‘I’ll head to the room first.’

The stinky witch walked to the guest room and closed the door.

Qin Song quickly explained to Ting Ting. ‘I’m innocent. I don’t have anything shady to do with her. If I did have even the slightest bad intention about her I’ll die a painful death, I won’t have a proper burial and I can’t rest in peace.’

Han Ting Ting was frustrated she couldn't push Qin Song away from her. 'Let me go!'

'If I let you go, you won't run off?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song was tired from the long day. He loosened his hold around Ting Ting. Unexpectedly she turned around to run off to the bedroom. He pulled her back and hugged her tight.

'Honey, listen to my explanation first,' Qin Song said.

Han Ting Ting's heart was on fire... her school set!

'She's a potential new investor. After the banquet there was a freak storm and we were both drenched. She didn't have a car. I couldn't leave someone in the rain and get sick. I had no choice but to take her back here for her assistant to come get her. I showered upstairs, nothing happened!' Qin Song explained. 'Honey, you have to believe me, it's the truth.'

Han Ting Ting stopped crying. 'She's your special female client, right? The same woman that wears the fragrance that makes you sneeze?'

'Um,' Qin Song admitted. 'I said special as in a special nuisance! Look at what she's done to my face.' He put Ting Ting's hand on his face and looked at her pitifully. 'My face can only have an allergic reaction because of my wife. Honey, I'll buy you a cat. Whenever you're angry at me use the cat's fur to blow it onto my nose. You can punish me anytime.'

Han Ting Ting struggled to get out of Qin Song's hold. 'Let me go make ginger tea for both of you.'

'My wife's the best! Give me a welcome home kiss,' Qin Song said. He held Ting Ting's face and kissed her deeply. 'Honey, your show of jealousy is loveable! Feel my heart, it's pounding for you.'

Yuan Yi Yi popped her head out of the guest room. She laughed at the amusing Qin Song and his little wife's reunion scene. 'Sorry for interrupting... my assistant is here to pick me up.'

Qin Song lifted Ting Ting slightly off the floor and moved to the side to make room for the stinky witch to leave, the sooner she left the better.

But the moment the stinky witch stepped out, Qin Song was shocked.

The stinky witch's blue skirt reached to her bottom, she was about one point seven metres so her long legs stood out. It would have made a lot of people drool. The white V-neck crop top with only one button in the middle, showed off more cleavage than it hid... it was an eye opener for Qin Song who've never seen another half-naked woman after meeting Ting Ting.

Yuan Yi Yi pretended she felt comfortable in such a revealing white V-neck crop top. She felt it was a loveable school outfit but the style didn't suit her. She adjusted the white top to hide her practically opened chest. She smiled at Qin Song's little wife. 'It's nice to meet you, I'm Yuan Yi Yi.'

'Um,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting didn't think there was anything nice about meeting Yuan Yi Yi whilst Yuan Yi Yi wore her school set!

Yuan Yi Yi felt it was more like she heard about Qin Song's little wife long ago and it didn't feel like a first meeting.

Han Ting Ting wanted to hurry up and faint. 'Hello, I'm Han Ting Ting.'

Yuan Yi Yi stopped herself from smiling a secret smile. 'I know.'

Yuan Yi Yi's phone rang and it was her assistant. 'I'll take my leave. Thank you for letting me borrow your clothes.' She winked at Han Ting Ting. 'I love it!'

'Ahem...' Qin Song coughed to stop himself from laughing.

Han Ting Ting wanted to go lock herself in the bedroom, she didn't want to see another person for the rest of her life.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting took one step, he held her back by the waist and laughed. 'Where are you going, my little student?'

Han Ting Ting struggled to escape. 'I want to go make you ginger tea.'

'Honey, do you really think I need to drink ginger tea?' Qin Song whispered. He hugged Ting Ting's waist from behind. He nibbled her earlobe. 'My whole body is hot. My Ting Bao, are you hot too?'

'Um, hot,' Han Ting Ting admitted.

‘My Ting Bao is good,’ Qin Song whispered.

Qin Song kissed Ting Ting’s neck and shoulder. She muffled a moan.

‘My Ting Bao is a good student and a good student deserves to be rewarded, right?’ Qin Song whispered.

Qin Song glided his fingers from Ting Ting’s waist to her collar bone. It took little effort from him before the sound of her clothes ripping was heard.

Han Ting Ting thought Song Song was driven crazy!

Han Ting Ting wanted to cry out for mercy. The Song Song behind her back had gone crazy! He pushed her onto the sofa and she wanted her refund back. She wasn’t the one who wore the school uniform! Tu Tu that scam artist!

‘Mr Qin junior, we’ve got the evidence,’ Qin Song’s assistant said.

‘Go ahead,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song went into the kitchen to get a glass of apple juice. He slowly drank sip by sip whilst taking the call. But he was distracted by his desire to exercise with Ting Ting again tonight, she made his heart bloom, his head cleared and his whole body refreshed.

‘It happened as you anticipated. Someone attempted to block your exit from the venue today. But I haven’t found out who leaked your schedule,’ Qin Song’s assistant said.

‘No need to investigate. They won’t gunning for me. They probably didn’t know I was going to be there otherwise they wouldn’t dare to make a move. It’s more likely they wanted to give Yuan Yi Yi a scare so she wouldn’t have anything to do with me,’ Qin Song said. He saw the warm lighting in the living room whilst he stood in the shadowed corner of the kitchen. ‘But I think whoever is behind it is scared that I’m living a long and prosperous life.’

‘It was lucky you were there or Miss Yuan would have been injured,’ Qin Song’s assistant said.

Qin Song hung up the phone. His uncles were bumbling old fools. Did they really think little cat and mouse tactics would make the stinky witch scared?

Unfortunately for them the stinky witch wasn't weak as she made herself appear on the outside. He smiled coldly, his foolish uncles dared to mess with the stinky witch. The stinky witch was going to make them pay double that it'd be difficult for his uncles to live comfortable lives in the future.

If Qin Song had no blood relations with his uncles, he wouldn't hesitate to deal with them one by one. But since they made another bad judgement, that person secretly backing the stinky witch wasn't going to go easy on them. Unlike him that person wasn't sympathetic or good natured. He wanted to get the tender over and done with. Then he'd kick his uncles out of Qin's company and give them a chance to live a peaceful retired life.

That person... Qin Song had mixed thoughts about that person, he didn't know whether to thank or curse that person.

It was the middle of the night. Qin Song had enough of planning his next moves. He went into the living room and sat beside Ting Ting who was sleeping deeply. He gently rubbed her cheeks.

'Um,' Han Ting Ting murmured.

No matter how deep Han Ting Ting slept, one touch from Song Song and it'd make her body alert. She opened her eyes and saw his face. She looked at him lovingly.

One gentle look from Ting Ting and Qin Song forgot everything that gave him a headache. He laid on the sofa and hugged her. He pinched her cheek. 'Why did you wake up? Do you want more?'

The 'little country bun' resting against Qin Song's chest nodded her head.

Qin Song was elated, he wiped away Ting Ting's sweaty and messy hair strands from her face. He lifted her chin and kissed her hard. 'Did you find it refreshing tonight?'

Han Ting Ting pressed her embarrassed face on his chest and bit his chest. Song Song teased her and cried out in pain. 'Song Song, are you happy?'

'Um,' Qin Song admitted. Tonight's meat session aimed straight at his heart.

His lips pressed to her ear. 'But it was because I was loving you that made me happy. If it was someone else nothing would have happened and I would have kicked them out the door.'

Han Ting Ting didn't say anything else. She hugged Song Song's waist.

'Honey, what made me react was your intention not the outfit. I just need to think about you thinking of different ways to seduce me and I'd be ready to explode,' Qin Song said. In the tranquil living room he kissed Ting Ting and whispered many things in her ear to reassure her. 'My Ting Bao is good. In the future, my Ting Bao has to be good each day and night.'

The lights were turned off and Han Ting Ting had to undergo advanced lessons throughout the night. She quietly sent a heartfelt apology to her little students, because she'd have to reschedule the next morning's dancing lesson for another day.

End of Chapter Twelve (Part 2 of 2)

Related

Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Thirteen

Early morning, at Qin's company.

Since Qin Yun's illness took a turn for the worst, Qin Song took temporary leave from Liang's company and returned to look after Qin's company. Qin Song's secretary rarely seen Qin Song whistling and had a euphoric aura around him entering Qin's company until the day he returned to take over Qin's company.

The sudden return of Mr Qin junior to Qin's company caused a media frenzy.

Qin Song's trusted assistant gave Qin Song a stack of photos.

'Yesterday afternoon when Miss Yuan left your home the paparazzi took photos of her. Miss Chen Yun had stopped them publishing the photos. These photos were just delivered here,' Qin Song's trusted assistant said.

The photos of Yuan Yi Yi showed off a trim figure in a skimpy school uniform outfit. Yuan Yi Yi confidently walked to her assistant's car, looked directly at the paparazzi and smiled sweetly at them like being caught leaving a married man's house in lingerie was an everyday occurrence.

'Mr Qin junior, if you don't need me for anything else I'll take my leave,' Qin Song's trusted assistant said and left Qin's company.

The moment Qin Song's trusted assistant left, Qin Song looked over the photos. He couldn't help smiling cheekily like a cat playing around with a dried fish. He rubbed his chin as he remembered his after school lessons with Ting Ting last night then he took out his phone.

Tu Tu was a beneficiary of Qin Song's good mood. Tu Tu suddenly received a lump sum payment transferred to her bank account that was equivalent to what she earned from her online shop in a year. Tu Tu read the concise message attached to the mysterious transaction – 'Buy all, thank you.' Tu Tu laughed and figured out who her mysterious buyer was it was none other than her best friend Ting Ting's husband, Mr Wild Boar Head.

A smiling Tu Tu selected all the lingerie sets in Ting Ting's size, wrapped it up and express post it to Qin Song. Tu Tu didn't forget to include the photo shopped pictures of the Han household darling daughter Ting Bao's face attached to the lingerie models' bodies. Tu Tu thought having a best friend marrying into a rich family was a good thing for her budding online business.

The hype of the Qin's company public tender was a combination of the influential businessman Chen Yi Feng's interest and the leaked photos of an opposing potential investor Yuan Yi Yi from Singapore arriving at the Qin's company district.

Leaked photos of the married Mr Qin junior drenched in a car sitting cosily with the young, beautiful and successful Miss Yuan Yi Yi who was also drenched led to rumors about their shady relationship. It sparked interest of many companies to consider bidding for a stake in Qin's company, because if Mr Qin junior had the ability to have Mr Yuan senior's daughter Yuan Yi Yi under his thumb then investing in Mr Qin junior's company would give them a back door connection with both Liang's company and Yuan's company.

It was speculated that the dragon strength of Chen Yi Feng's company was weary of the combined phoenix strength of Liang's company and the Zhang household. With the added backing of Yuan's company under Qin Song's belt, the chances of Chen Yi Feng successfully bidding for a stake in Qin's company was slim.

Most of the shareholders of Qin's company that were indecisive of who to support finally directed their support to Qin Song. The few stubborn elderly shareholders remaining bet their entire fortune to support Chen Yi Feng.

Finally the goddess of victory was in Qin Song's corner. Unexpectedly Qin Song wasn't thrilled to welcome the goddess of victory, he was livid and wanted to tear apart his office.

Chen Yun nonchalantly entered Qin's company. Qin Song's secretaries forewarned Chen Yun to be prepared for the dangerous temper that lurked behind Qin Song's office door. Chen Yun took no heed of their warning and entered Qin Song's office.

‘Qin Song, you wanted to see me?’ Chen Yun asked.

Qin Song threw the trashy news articles about his alleged affair with Yuan Yi Yi on his work desk and glared at Chen Yun. ‘Chen Yun, you have some explaining to do!’

Qin Song was particularly unimpressed by the publicised close up photos of him and Yuan Yi Yi in the same car driving to his and Ting Ting’s home. ‘I remembered I told you to stop all of these kinds of photos from being released!’

‘That’s right you did. That’s why I stopped all photos of Yuan Yi Yi leaving your house. If those photos were released... then I would be surprised,’ Chen Yun said.

‘Miss Chen Yun, you’re supposed to be a reputable PR manager. The preservation of my public image is your responsibility. But you allowed these sordid rumors about me to be circulated, don’t you feel any remorse?’ Qin Song asked coldly.

‘I take all my work responsibilities seriously. Not only am I responsible for protecting your public image but I’m also responsible for enhancing Qin’s company public reputation. If it weren’t for my assistance then those flaky shareholders wouldn’t be supporting you and there would be no garnered interest of many successful companies to participate in Qin’s company public tender. You didn’t have to battle a bloody war to claim victory isn’t that the best form of attack? I came here thinking you were going to give me a raise,’ Chen Yun said.

Chen Yun was amused by Qin Song’s look of contempt. ‘Besides these photos are real but the rumors are baseless speculations. Qin Song if you’re innocent then you have no reason to worry about these trivial gossip articles.’

‘Hey! I only took Yuan Yi Yi home to change clothes, don’t look at me with that accusing look of yours!’ Qin Song said.

‘You should save your explanations for your wife, no need to explain the details to me,’ Chen Yun said.

‘My wife was home that day!’ Qin Song said.

‘Then everything’s good. The main thing is that your wife knows the truth. Why do you need to care what outsiders think?’ Chen Yun said.

‘Big sister Chen Yun...’ Qin Song said. He thumped his work desk. ‘Can you give me a little respect? I’m the one paying your salary. Before making important decisions like this you should at least ask me for my opinion!’

‘Mr Qin junior, I’m only here temporarily to help you during this critical time. Once I’ve trained a new PR to assist you, I’m heading back to Liang’s company,’ Chen Yun said and shrugged her shoulders. ‘Tomorrow I’ll hold a press conference to squash these rumors and give out a warning that we’ll take legal action against those who continue to spread false rumors. So Mr Qin junior, you can relax.’

Chen Yun felt she said enough and stood to leave. ‘If you don’t need me for anything else I’m heading back to work. Oh, right one more thing. I forgot to tell you, after this incident it really made people see you in a different light.’

Qin Song’s temper calmed a bit after hearing Chen Yun compliment him how he handled himself during a rough period. He’d never heard Chen Yun compliment anyone apart from Liang Fei Fang. ‘Thanks for the compliment.’

‘Oh, don’t misunderstand. I was talking about Yuan Yi Yi’s skimpy student outfit. Looking back, out of the Liang’s sworn brothers you were ranked first for being the most naive. Who would have thought you had a wild side?’ Chen Yun teased.

Qin Song gritted his teeth. ‘Chen-Yun!’

Mr Qin junior’s sudden scream travelled throughout Qin’s company building.

Qin Song was too busy working that he had to skip lunch. He was in a rush to finish his work schedule for the day to make it in time for dinner at his parents’ house.

When Qin Song arrived at his parents’ house and saw the servants bringing cooked dishes to the dining table and his parents were playing chess in the living room. He didn’t see his wife and became anxious. ‘Ting Ting isn’t here yet?’

‘Ting Ting’s here. She’s in the kitchen making stewed quail soup. Ting Ting’s mum had asked a friend to deliver wild quails from the country for your dad. It’s nutritious and will help your dad’s surgery scars heal,’ Zhang Yu explained. She

saw her son's worried look. Her eyes lit up, there was trouble in paradise. 'What happened? Are you and Ting Ting fighting?'

Qin Song creased his forehead. What sort of a mother did he have that would be amused whenever their son and daughter-in-law were at odds? He wanted to wipe his mum's teasing smile away, how could she be amused by his anxiety?

Qin Yun slowly opened his wife's clenched hand, took out the chess piece she hid and turned to face his son. 'Song Song, go see how Ting Ting is doing in the kitchen. It's nearly dinner time.'

Qin Song went to the kitchen and saw Ting Ting in a daze looking at the pot of stewed quail soup. He silently gestured for the servants to leave the kitchen and tip toed to hug Ting Ting.

Qin Song kissed Ting Ting's cheek and rested his chin on her shoulder.

Han Ting Ting was startled. She elbowed Song Song's stomach. 'You scared me!'

'Honey, what were you thinking about?' Qin Song asked. He hugged Ting Ting's waist tighter. 'Why didn't you come to the door to welcome me back from work? When I came inside and didn't see you, I thought you were angry at me.'

'I'm not angry. I was home that day and you explained to me. Why would I be angry?' Han Ting Ting said softly.

'You mean it?' Qin Song asked.

'Um,' Han Ting Ting said. She turned off the stove and pushed Song Song away. 'Go outside, don't bother me in the kitchen.'

Qin Song pulled Ting Ting close to him, kissed and bit her lips lightly. 'My wife is the best!'

Song Song happily went outside to wait for dinner. But Han Ting Ting was feeling sad in the kitchen. She didn't know if telling a white lie was the right thing to do... if she told Song Song the truth about how she felt then wouldn't she come across as petty?

Han Ting Ting's heart protested that she should have made a scene, cry and beat up her clueless husband. He didn't have to put up with the pity looks from

strangers at the supermarkets the way she had to because he brought a vixen to their home to change clothes.

After dinner Zhang Yu dragged Han Ting Ting upstairs to check out Zhang Yu's new spring outfits. The father and son duo stayed downstairs to play chess in the living room.

'When you and Ting Ting are home, make sure you explain properly to Ting Ting! I can tolerate what happened because it was necessary during this crucial time. But in the future when your position as head of Qin's company is stable, avoid using such shady tactics,' Qin Yun advised.

'Ting Ting understands, I don't need to explain,' Qin Song bragged.

It was rare for Qin Song to brag in front of his wise and all-knowing guru dad. The one thing in Qin Song's life that made him extremely proud was his wife. Ting Ting was a thousand times more understanding and gentle than his mum.

Qin Song felt prouder when he made a good chess move against his dad. 'Dad, how's your body condition lately?'

Qin Yun had waited patiently to trap his son. His wait wasn't in vain, his son made the wrong move and within a couple of moves it was checkmate. Qin Yun won the chess game against his son.

'Aren't you the one that should know best about my body condition? Every second day you'll ask my doctors to report to you about how my body's coping after my second surgery,' Qin Yun said.

Qin Yun understood his son well. He wanted to be a strong dad that seemed bullet proof in the eyes of his son. He didn't like seeing his son worrying about him. But it was getting harder for him to put up a front that he was in control of his own fate, including the ability to extend his fragile lifespan.

'Just worry about yourself first. Don't worry, until you're living a comfortable life both at home and at work, your dad will have your back,' Qin Yun said to his son in a loving tone that he himself didn't recognise.

Qin Song felt like it was a once in a lifetime experience to hear his dad talk to

him in such a gentle and loving way. He scratched his head and smiled. 'Yes, dad.'

Qin's company public tender was a success according to plan, Yuan Yi Yi became a bigger stakeholder of Qin's company than the almighty Chen Yi Feng. The flow on effect was that the power struggle at Qin's company was finally put to rest.

Qin Song's uncles that supported Chen Yi Feng had a revelation after their brutal defeat. Qin Song's uncles had always viewed their nephew Qin Song as a kid who hadn't wiped his nose clean was a mirror image of their dad that year that their dad smiled with them like nothing was wrong and the next moment before they realised it was too late, their dad had heartlessly cornered them at a dead end with no escape. Their dad secured Qin's company for his favoured son Qin Yun the same way Qin Song took away their last opportunity to take back Qin's company.

A banquet was held to commemorate the success of Qin's company public tender and to congratulate Qin Song for securing his position at Qin's company. That night all of the six Liang's sworn brothers gathered at the banquet, it was a lively night.

Qin Song went around the banquet venue to accept congratulations and was forced to drink too much alcohol. When no one was paying attention to him, he fled to the balcony to get fresh air and clear his head.

Qin Song reflected what he had to go through to win his position. He had to work tirelessly, overcome his doubts and make sacrifices. But he thought that was life, because of going after their goals anyone would willingly do whatever it took to achieve it. It made him stronger and he was able to protect Ting Ting and his family whom he loved.

Qin Song's thoughts were interrupted when he felt a presence at a corner of the balcony and turned around. 'Who's there?'

Yuan Yi Yi came out of the shadows from the balcony corner. She wore a long black off the shoulder dress that suited her tall frame. She smiled and lifted her champagne glass. 'I was here first.'

Qin Song laughed. The dust settled and he didn't need pretend anymore that he wasn't in the loop. 'Cheers to you, hope we'll cooperate well in business.' He clinked his glass with Yuan Yi Yi's glass. 'Pass on my thanks to him for helping me. He had to waste a lot of time and energy because of me.'

Yuan Yi Yi thought for a while and then laughed comfortably. 'I told him that you knew a long time ago but he didn't believe me... little Qin Song, it's strange that you're a lot smarter than what people gave credit to you.'

'I've always been smart. It's because those sworn brothers of mine are show offs and my intelligence was overlooked,' Qin Song said and laughed.

Qin Song was in a happy and light mood, it felt like he was at his coming of age banquet.

'Is that why... because you knew about my connection with him and you won't seduced by me?' Yuan Yi Yi asked out of curiosity. 'I wasn't completely acting, you do match my taste, why don't...'

Qin Song rolled his eyes. 'I told you already I'm married. I love my wife.'

'Your wife... she's the opposite type to me,' Yuan Yi Yi said.

Yuan Yi Yi remembered Qin Song's little wife who wore a loveable yellow dress a couple of nights ago. Qin Song had an arm wrapped protectively around his little wife's shoulder. Yuan Yi Yi thought it didn't matter what costumes she wore, it'd be hard for her to give off the same sweet and fresh vibe that Qin Song's little wife had. Yuan Yi Yi's good mood suddenly turned a little sour.

'It has nothing to do with types. I only love Ting Ting,' Qin Song said. The alcohol blurred his usual common sense and he bubbled on more than he usually would. 'You're not that bad. You're just different a little.'

'Oh, what does that mean?' Yuan Yi Yi asked and smiled.

'You give off the feeling that you can't be caught. It could be because you do that on purpose. But love isn't that way, there's no escape, you should let it all go and have no regret,' Qin Song said. He remembered Yuan Yi Yi's miserable attempts to seduce him and laughed. 'Who's like you? You force yourself to seduce me then act indifferent afterward when it doesn't work to give yourself a way out. That's not one bit of a professional seductress.'

‘Hey!’ Yuan Yi Yi said and laughed loudly. She punched Qin Song’s chest. ‘I was testing you, teasing you for fun.’

Yuan Yi Yi’s punch made Qin Song stumble back a step but he was still smiling. They both took off their masks they wore since they knew each other. He preferred seeing the real playful Yuan Yi Yi than when Yuan Yi Yi was acting like a black widow.

When Qin Song stepped back he stood next to the balcony window. On the other side of the window he saw a stunned Ting Ting looking back at him.

Qin Song’s heart tightened... it was bad. He strode through the balcony door. Ting Ting saw him coming toward her, turned away from him and walked off without looking back at him.

‘Hey,’ Qin Song said. His longer legs helped him to catch up to Ting Ting within a few steps. ‘Won’t you spending time with Qin Sang and my other sworn brothers’ wives? How come you’re here?’

Qin Song wanted to slap his mouth the moment the wrong choice of words came out of his mouth. It made Ting Ting misunderstand him more.

Han Ting Ting pushed Qin Song back. Her whole body felt cold. ‘I’m sorry. I didn’t know you didn’t want me to come here. I’m leaving and let you two continue doing whatever you two want to do.’

‘I only said a few words with her. You said you believed me, why are you still angry? Of course I want you here. I was worried that you didn’t want to come to this kind of formal...’ Qin Song explained gently in Ting Ting’s ear.

Qin Song noticed the reporters’ attention was turned to him and Ting Ting. He pulled her closer to him and shielded her from the reporters’ camera lens.

Han Ting Ting felt like her fears were validated. She didn’t belong in Qin Song’s world. She was fooling herself that as long as she did her best to be understanding she could get pass her insecurities being around someone who was above her class. Even his protective nature he reserved for her felt like a burden. It was best for her to escape his world.

Han Ting Ting pushed Qin Song harder and escaped his hold. She lifted the hem of her dress and ran from the banquet venue.

Qin Song never thought Ting Ting who was usually gentle and understanding was making a public scene in front of his guests and reporters. He was still surprised when she suddenly pushed him hard enough for him to nearly fall.

The reporters chose that moment to circle Qin Song. Their cameras flashed, competing with one another who'd get the best shot of him looking despondent after a public fight with his wife.

Qin Song was frustrated he couldn't smash the cameras. He held up his hand in front of his face. 'What's so interesting? I'm not the first man to be embarrassed by his wife.'

The reporters laughed. They were used to the Liang's sworn brothers being under their wives' thumbs.

Qin Song took his opportunity to leave the circle of reporters and chase after his wife.

The reporters let him go because they got what they needed to publicize that the youngest Liang's sworn brother was also scared of his wife.

Qin Song was able to chase down Ting Ting at the parking lot. He grabbed her and hugged her. 'Hey!' He was breathless from the running. 'Where are you going?'

'You don't need to care!' Han Ting Ting said.

'Of couse I need to care about my Ting Bao,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song pulled Ting Ting up slightly off the ground with one arm gripped around her waist and his other arm supported her neck. He kissed her to be breathless as him.

Qin Song had to make final preparations before the tender so for the last week on average he got to sleep four hours a day. He'd neglected Ting Ting for four days and three nights. He was free to make up for lost time and wanted to love her on the spot.

'Ah!' Qin Song cried out.

Qin Song carefully put Ting Ting back on the ground. Then he touched his swollen lips, she had bit his lips too hard that blood trickled out.

Han Ting Ting was furious and her whole body was shaken. She bit Qin Song's lips but it wasn't enough to get rid of her anger so she lifted her leg to kick his leg calf. He avoided her kick, she lost her balance and her body leaned back.

Qin Song rushed to Ting Ting's side and grabbed her before she fell.

'Let go!' Han Ting Ting ordered.

Han Ting Ting hated herself that she needed Qin Song's help and it made her angrier. She glared at him.

'What's wrong with you?' Qin Song asked.

Qin Song had no clue why Ting Ting was behaving unlike her usual self. He didn't know why she was so angry.

'Ting Bao,' Qin Song called gently.

Qin Song lifted his hand to rub Ting Ting's cheek but she slapped his arm away hard.

Han Ting Ting saw Qin Song braced the arm she hit and felt that she was too hot headed. She waited a while to calm down before opening her mouth. 'Go back inside, don't follow me. I want to go home on my own.'

'No. Tell me what you want me to do so you won't be angry anymore. Don't bottle up your feelings. Think about it, if I let you go home by yourself then I would be too worried about you to mingle with the guests properly,' Qin Song said.

'You were mingling with your guests more than properly before. Wasn't it you that I saw laughing and flirting with your special guest? I'll just be intruding on your mingling style if I stay,' Han Ting Ting said coldly.

Han Ting Ting was in no mood to be lectured. If Qin Song said anything else she'd be angry enough to scratch his handsome face off.

Qin Song took a deep breath. 'Ting Ting, I've never had the patience to explain my actions to anyone before. You're my only exception, because of you I'm always willing to explain to you anything you want and promise you anything you want to clear your misunderstandings about me. I'm not attracted to Yuan Yi Yi. I just think she's a little interesting. It has nothing to do with whether she's a male

or female. I'm interested in comparing work styles of people in the same field as me.'

'Don't say anything else!' Han Ting Ting said and took a deep breath of her own. 'Qin Song, don't say anything. I'm sorry I stepped over the line before. I don't know why I'm like this tonight. Your work is complicated and I don't understand that side of you. You need a kindred friend to share thoughts about your line of work, I get it. In the future I won't cause another public scene.' She didn't want to look at him anymore and lowered her head. 'Let me go home, I don't want to go back inside.'

'Let me take you home,' Qin Song said.

'You don't have to,' Han Ting Ting said.

'I'll take you home,' Qin Song said.

'I said you don't have to take me home!' Han Ting Ting yelled.

Han Ting Ting's last shred of patience was gone. She hit Qin Song's shoulders to get him to let her go. In the midst of their tug a war, his cufflink grazed her wrist and a red scratch line appeared on her grazed wrist.

Han Ting Ting's wrist stung. She pulled her hand back and accidentally scratched Qin Song's forehead with one of her finger nails that were manicured for tonight. The surprise sting on his forehead made him loosen his hold on her. She used the opportunity when his guard was down and dashed into her car to drive home.

Qin Song touched his forehead and there was a bit of blood where Ting Ting's nail scraped his forehead. By the time he recovered from the sting, he was standing alone with a trail of smoke left behind by the car exhaust. He gritted his teeth and had one deep regret – 'damn it! He shouldn't have taught Ting Ting to drive!'

That night, Ting Ting locked the bedroom door. Qin Song picked up the pillow she left in front of the door and knocked on the door until he was too tired to breathe. There was nothing else he could do that night except spend a lonely night sleeping on the sofa in the living room.

Early morning Qin Song was awoken by the creak of a door. He sat up and ran upstairs to the bedroom. Ting Ting was gone.

Qin Song thought there was a slight chance Ting Ting was somewhere downstairs. He ran downstairs and looked for her in the kitchen. On the dining table was a steaming hot breakfast. Next to the breakfast she cooked for him was a note, her writing wasn't her usual neat writing it looked like her hand was shaking when she wrote the note – 'I'm going to my parents' house, I'll be back before dinner.'

Qin Song closed his eyes and sighed. He folded the note, showered and went to work.

Han Ting Ting sped to her parents' house. But she stalled at her parents' front door, she didn't know if she should go in or go back to Qin Song's house... she felt homeless.

After Han Ting Ting married Qin Song, last night was their first real fight. She didn't know she had such a bad temper dormant in her heart. She just needed to have one thought about Qin Song and she'd want to really scratch his face to vent instead of an accidental scratch like last night.

'Ting Bao?' Ting's mum asked. She went outside to throw rubbish into the bin but she was alarmed to see her daughter who looked soulless standing at the front door. 'Why aren't you coming inside but standing out here?'

'Mum... is dad home?' Han Ting Ting asked to evade her mum's question.

'Why would that old man be at home? He's busy with work that he skips breakfast most mornings. Come inside. There's still mung bean soup left, I'll scoop you a bowl,' Ting's mum said and pulled her daughter inside.

Ting's mum was plucking herbs and noticed her daughter ate two spoonfuls of mung beans and put the bowl down on the table. 'What's wrong? Does it taste off?'

'It's fine. I don't want to eat anymore,' Han Ting Ting said. She went to help her mum fry vegetables. 'Mum, let's cook the crabs for lunch. We can add lots of chili.'

Han Ting Ting poked the crabs that were crawling inside the bag.

‘This little girl, when did you start liking chili dishes?’ Ting’s mum asked. She wiped her hands and patted her daughter’s back. ‘Go outside and play, I’ll call you to taste test when I’m done.’

Han Ting Ting crawled onto her old bed and went online to chat with Tu Tu.

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘You overreacted, he only said a few words and you had an outburst. The more you live with that Mr Wild Boar Head the more you’re becoming like him, childish, petty and easy to go crazy.’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘(view pout CGI)’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘Honestly, you’re in the wrong this time. Your Mr Wild Boar Head explained to you that what you imagined didn’t happen.’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Tu Tu... why does it sound like you’re defending him too much?’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘Ahem... am I that obvious?’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Um.’

Tu Tu Is Not Mao Mao: ‘I give up.’

Afterward Tu Tu added Qin Song to their conversation and logged off.

Ting Bao’s Wild Husband: ‘Honey!’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘(view lol CGI)’

Ting Bao’s Wild Husband: ‘I didn’t eat breakfast. My stomach hurts (insert crying CGI)’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘Didn’t I make you breakfast and put it on the dining table for you? Why didn’t you eat breakfast?’

Ting Bao’s Wild Husband: ‘I’m punishing myself.’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘...’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: ‘I’m eating lunch at my parents’ house then I’ll go home. Remember to come home early tonight. I’ll make you stewed chicken.’

Ting Bao’s Wild Husband: ‘Are you still angry at me?’

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'It was me being petty.'

Ting Bao's Wild Husband: 'Honey, you're becoming more reasonable by the day.'

Ting Bao Most Obedient: 'Another way of putting it is that you-think-I'm-petty-too?'

Ting Bao's Wild Husband: 'Honey, I need to go to a meeting. Later when I'm free I'll text you. Don't be angry anymore. Believe me and believe in yourself too! I had a hard time waiting for you to come into my life. I love you like crazy but I still don't feel I love you enough. I don't have any room in my heart to even like anyone else. Tonight I'll come over your parents' house, we'll all have dinner together and then I'll drive us home. Honey, I love you! (view kiss CGI)'

Song Song logged off and Han Ting Ting logged off too. She felt both happy and troubled at the same time. She sighed... love was sweet torture.

Qin Song rushed to Ting Ting's parents' house after work. He brought gifts for her parents and gave her a fresh bouquet of red roses.

Han Ting Ting ran to the door to welcome Song Song back from work, she wore a serious expression but on the inside her heart bloomed because of his thoughtful gestures and willingness to meet her in the middle.

Earlier when Han Ting Ting woke up from a rare afternoon nap, she received a text message from Song Song.

'The meeting just finish. I was tired but had to act alert in the meeting. My work plan was good and better than the plans others came up with. But there's always a few creeps picking on my young age and criticise me if they get a chance. How hateful! I want time to fly faster. I want to get all the priority paperwork done that way I can take leave and we can go on our honeymoon that was postponed. We'll go anywhere you want to visit. Honey, what you said last night made sense. I've never talked to you about my work before. It's because I don't have the heart to make you worry about me, not because I want to save my work troubles to share with some kindred friend. Honey, I willingly worked hard because of you but I didn't want to tell you about my work struggles. I put

myself in your shoes and realised from your perspective, a husband and wife should share their struggles together, lean on each other and that I shouldn't hide what's troubling me from you. In the future I'll report to you daily about my work day. In return, Ting Bao remember to prepare rewards for me each day and night!

When Han Ting Ting helped to take off Song Song's jacket, she breathed in his natural body scent and thought about the 'reward' that Song Song loved most. She blushed about giving him rewards each day and night.

Qin Song hugged Ting Ting and sulked to gauge her mood. 'Honey!'

Ting Ting fiddled with the roses to pretend she didn't care about what Qin Song was doing. He felt it was safe and bravely kissed her cheek. She pouted and his heart felt relieved. He grabbed her free hand and bit her wrist.

'Ahem...' Ting's dad coughed. He came home and found his son-in-law and his daughter wrapped around each other and their public display of affection was more than he expected to find at his front door. 'Song Song, you're back from work?'

Qin Song stiffly turned around and gave his dad-in-law an awkward smile. 'Dad!'

Ting's dad hung up his jacket inside the house and was happy to see his daughter held a bouquet of roses. 'Song Song, you bought roses for Ting Ting?'

Ting's mum put the cooked dishes on the dining table. She noticed her daughter's roses too and wanted to tease her daughter. 'Ting Bao is still a little girl.'

'I didn't ask Song Song to buy me roses,' Han Ting Ting protested. She was framed. She turned to look at the sweet trouble maker Song Song. 'Who told you to buy me roses?'

'Hey, why are you talking like that? Look at you, Song Song had spoiled you rotten,' Ting's mum scolded teasingly.

Qin Song acted innocent in front of Ting Ting's parents. He 'accidentally' swept his hair to the side and it showed Ting Ting's scratch mark on his forehead.

‘Oh!’ Ting’s mum cried out. She rushed to pull Song Song to sit on the sofa. ‘Who did this to you?’

‘Last night I was careless and hit my forehead against a door,’ Qin Song lied.

Ting’s mum pitied her son-in-law. That scratch mark on his forehead wasn’t from a door! She glanced at her daughter who fiddled with her sharp nails. She hit her daughter’s bottom.

Han Ting Ting couldn’t pretend she had nothing to do with Song Song’s forehead scratch. Unless she wanted another hit to her bottom she had no choice but to roll up a sleeve and showed the scratch on her wrist. ‘Mum, Song Song scratched me first.’

‘You’re still lying,’ Ting’s mum said. She pushed her daughter’s scratched wrist away. ‘Song Song doesn’t have sharp nails like you.’

‘Stop fighting. Let’s sit and eat dinner,’ Ting’s dad said.

At the dining table Ting’s mum picked up a chicken thigh and put it into Song Song’s bowl.

Qin Song innocently accepted his special treatment by his mum-in-law. He didn’t forget to smile like a good kid, it was his killer move he used on elders when he wanted them to dote on him.

Ting’s mum was blinded by her son-in-law’s charm and didn’t stop to put more food into his bowl during dinner.

Han Ting Ting was jealous her mum only cared about Song Song. She chewed her chicken wing and imagined she was chewing Song Song’s head off.

Ting’s dad was happy to have his favourite drinking partner and didn’t stop pouring wine for Song Song.

‘Ancient hubby, stop pouring wine for Song Song. You’re taking advantage of Song Song’s good nature, he wouldn’t dare to refuse wine from you. Later it won’t be safe for him to drive,’ Ting’s mum scolded her husband. She put more food into her son-in-law’s bowl. ‘Song Song, don’t pay attention to him and continue eating.’

Qin Song drank the wine, poured another glass of wine for him and his dad-in-

law. He took advantage of being an obedient son-in-law. 'It's rare I get to pour wine for dad. I'm happy to serve dad. Later Ting Ting will be driving us home.'

Han Ting Ting had chewed her chicken wing to the bone. 'Tonight I'm sleeping over. Later I'll call a driver to take you home.'

'Oh?' Qin Song asked in his most disappointed tone.

'You're becoming more unreasonable by the day. Who said you can sleep over? Go home and sleep in your own bed,' Ting's mum said.

Han Ting Ting fiddled with her food in her bowl. 'I'm not going home.'

Ting's mum glared at her daughter. 'You dare not to listen to me?'

Han Ting Ting bit her lips. Song Song stuck his tongue out to tease her.

'Ahem...' Ting's dad coughed to clear the tensed mood. 'Ting Ting you can sleep over.'

Han Ting Ting was deeply moved and her eyes were misty. In her world her dad was the best!

Qin Song felt betrayed by his favourite dad-in-law. He looked pitifully at his dad-in-law to trigger their precious memories of their drink bonding sessions.

Ting's dad drank the glass of wine his pitiful son-in-law poured for him. 'Song Song, tonight you sleep over too.'

Han Ting Ting stared in disbelief... dad! Her dad and Song Song happily drank wine together. Her mum gave Song Song the last chicken thigh... her misty eyes cried a little.

That night, Han Ting Ting and Song Song slept in her old bed. Her old bed was small and they had to squeeze tight together to fit on it.

Han Ting Ting faced the wall and her back faced Song Song. She closed her eyes and refused to talk to him.

It was a gentle warm spring night unlike a hot and sticky summer night. Han Ting Ting and Song Song shared a bed sheet and he kept breathing hot air onto the back of her neck so she couldn't pretend he didn't exist.

‘Ting Bao. My loveable Ting Bao,’ Qin Song whispered.

‘Don’t call me!’ Han Ting Ting said.

Ting Ting covered Qin Song’s mouth. He stared at her shiny round eyes that shone in the dim lit room and it kicked start his animal drive.

Qin Song slowly licked Ting Ting’s palm.

Han Ting Ting was ticklish and laughed. She wiped her wet palm on one of Song Song’s cheeks and pinched his dry cheek. ‘You’re bad.’ Her voice was like that of ‘a girl who said hate but meant love.’

‘I hate you,’ Han Ting Ting said sweetly.

‘I love you,’ Qin Song whispered. He bit Ting Ting’s lips gently and licked over his bite marks on her lips. ‘You’re a trouble maker, but I really love you.’

Han Ting Ting’s heart softened at Song Song’s sincere love declarations. It was a warm spring night but his sweet whispers gave her goose bumps. She laid her head on his hard chest and kicked her petty jealousy from the bed they shared.

Qin Song’s breathing became hotter and heavier by the second. He whispered in Ting Ting’s ear. ‘The wall installations are they almost sound proof?’

‘Song Song, can you hear my parents snoring?’ Han Ting Ting asked.

‘Sound and clear,’ Qin Song whispered.

Qin Song took a deep breath. He noticed his discomfort made Ting Ting more triumphant and his heart cried out for the sweetest revenge.

‘There’s no other way,’ Qin Song said. He pretended to close his eyes. ‘Honey, you’ll need to endure your suffering. Remember to bite your tongue because the walls are thin.’

Han Ting Ting didn’t get to think deeply about what Song Song meant, his body ambushed her body and she remembered to bite her tongue throughout their sleepless night.

End of Chapter Thirteen

Related

part 1

Chapter Fourteen (Part 1)

Qin Song was woken up by the sound of a door creak. He groped around to find his soft and fragrant 'little country bun' who was sleeping peacefully on his chest. He figured since his hands were wide awake and active, his hands' next destination would be to pinch Ting Ting's toned plump bottom.

Han Ting Ting was startled and opened her sleepy eyes. She was still sleepy and didn't appreciate being woken up early to reward someone with uncourteous hands. She scratched Song Song's chest to let him know she wanted to catch up on sleep she lost because he kept her up all night.

Qin Song's eyes were teary from Ting Ting's three scratches on his chest that drew blood. He obediently let her lie comfortably back on his chest, closed his eyes and went back to sleep.

When Qin Song and Ting Ting woke up again, her parents weren't home. Her mum left them congee and many of his favourite dishes on the dining table. He thought if there were omelettes too then it would be the perfect breakfast. But recently Ting Ting's mood swings were unpredictable and he didn't dare to ask her to cook them omelettes.

Qin Song thought marriage was a mysterious phenomenon. After marriage his and Ting Ting's personalities were swapped. She became the one that bullied him and he became an obedient student scared to upset the teacher. He quietly ate his small serving of congee as he watched his wife devour his favourite dishes on the dining table.

When Ting Ting swallowed the last water spinach stir fried in chili the doorbell rang. Qin Song obediently put his chopsticks on the dining table and went to open the front door.

At the door wasn't Han Ting Ting's parents who fled their home before dawn because they were traumatised by their daughter and son-in-law's lively performance that lasted all night and the acoustics were sound and clear from their bedroom.

‘Young master, Mrs Qin senior asked for me to drive you and Mrs Qin junior to the hospital,’ the driver said.

Qin Song stood frozen at the front door.

Han Ting Ting didn’t hear Song Song’s conversation with the driver but Song Song’s soulless body made her run to him. She held his cold hand and tears formed in her eyes. ‘Song Song?’

Qin Song withdrew his bleak expression because he didn’t want to make Ting Ting anxious. He patted her back. ‘Honey, pack our belongings.’ He forced a smile to reassure her. ‘Afterwards we’ll go to the hospital to visit dad.’

Qin Song and Ting Ting were driven to the hospital. At the hospital unlike last time there were no vultures circling outside Qin Yun’s hospital room. Qin Song had banished most of the vultures into retirement overseas. The few vultures that lingered behind at Qin’s company after their revelation that Qin Song was no longer a kid who hadn’t wiped his nose clean, didn’t dare to make a squeak and wisely avoided the hospital to stay out of Qin Song’s way.

Qin Song thought his victory against his uncles was meaningless the moment he stepped into the hospital. His heart was deeply pained more than he anticipated during those nights reading his dad’s prognosis reports.

Qin Song entered the hospital meeting room but it wasn’t full of the doctors he contracted.

‘The thirteen specialists that you invited to the hospital have flown back overseas, they can’t do anymore to help Mr Qin senior. As for the local specialists they’ve cancelled the meeting because their hands are tied too,’ a hospital doctor explained.

Qin Song hands were clenched. ‘Who gave them permission to cancel the meeting? Are-they-all-sick-of-living?’

The hospital doctor dropped the heavy pile of Qin Yun’s health reports. He bent his shaky legs to retrieve the fallen reports.

Since Qin Song married Ting Ting and took over Qin’s company, outsiders were

accustomed to the matured and responsible Qin Song. But Qin Song's violent outburst in the hospital meeting room reminded everyone how frightening it was to be on the receiving end of his temper if they offended him.

'Within twelve hours I want them all standing in front of me,' Qin Song ordered. 'Or I'll make them disappear for good!'

'Yes, Mr Qin junior,' the hospital doctor said and bowed his head.

Qin Song heard footsteps behind but didn't turn around because he recognised it was his mum's footsteps.

'Forget it!' Zhang Yu said.

Zhang Yu helped the frightened doctor pick up her husband's health reports. 'I gave them permission to cancel the meeting. They're already on their planes, don't call them back.' She nodded her head to the doctor. 'You can leave.'

The hospital doctor was relieved he was rescued by Mrs Qin senior, he quickly left the hospital meeting room and gently closed the door to give Mrs Qin senior and the formidable Mr Qin junior privacy.

The mother and son were deadly quiet inside the hospital meeting room. Qin Song's temper showed no signs of subsiding.

Zhang Yu put a hand on her son's tensed shoulder and gently rubbed it to get rid some of his tension. 'Song Song...'

'Mum!' Qin Song spat out coldly.

'Let your dad be, he wants to spend his precious time left with us at home instead of a sterile hospital bed,' Zhang Yu said.

Qin Song punched the hospital meeting table. Blood dripped from his fisted hand onto the dent of the table.

'Don't be like that,' Zhang Yu said. She pulled her son's arm and lifted his bleeding hand. She blew gently on his hand to ease the sting. 'Both you and I understand what's best for your dad. Let's not put him through the pain of a third surgery.'

'Mum, do you want me to see dad die?' Qin Song asked in a trembling voice. 'I can't do it.'

‘I know, it’s going to be hard. But the pain we’re going through can’t compare to the pain your dad is going through to hang on for us,’ Zhang Yu said.

Zhang Yu took a deep breath. It wasn’t the time for her to cry, she needed to convince her son to let her husband enjoy a peaceful life before death.

Zhang Yu patted the back of her son’s shoulder like she used to when he was a kid and something caused him to be upset, it was the only thing left she could do to comfort him.

‘Song Song,’ Zhang Yu said. ‘Your dad is Qin Yun. He’s infamous for his prideful ways. With the exception of when he proposed to me, he’d never bend down to anyone or any situation before. How can you bear to see your dad time after time punish his body and begging himself to stay strong?’

‘They’re not punishment, they’re treatments!’ Qin Song boomed.

‘Can the treatments cure him?’ Zhang Yu asked rhetorically.

Qin Song was defeated by his mum’s dead end question – there was no cure.

Qin Song realised a third surgery wasn’t to cure his dad’s cancer but it was a way for his dad to comfort and give their family hope that his dad could escape a death sentence.

Qin Song had sought after the latest drugs, reputable oncologists and medical equipment to treat his dad’s cancer. It wasn’t because he was a noble son, he just didn’t want to accept that he was losing his dad to death. His dad willingly let his body go through the painful treatments because his dad wanted to show him how much his dad loved him.

Qin Song felt he was selfish. He understood his dad was suffering for him but it was hard for him to let his dad go.

Qin Song thought that his mum was stronger than he could ever be. His mum was able to let go of her own selfishness and let go of their last hope that his dad would be cured.

‘Song Song, you’ve never had to undergo a surgery in your life. Your dad had his body cut up twice. I had a caesarean to give birth to you. Your dad was by my side the whole time the obstetrician performed the caesarean. Afterward it took

a long time for my body to heal. Your dad never wanted me to get pregnant again after he saw how much I had struggle post pregnancy,' Zhang Yu said. She couldn't hold back her tears any longer and cried. 'When your dad and I got married I told him I wanted to give him five children. That's how much your dad loves me and you. You and I are enough for him.'

Zhang Yu felt grateful she got to spend many happy years with her husband. The thought of their separation through death, it made her wish she was the one dying first. Grieving for her husband and the love they shared would be overwhelming for her.

'Song Song, if there was a cure do you think I would let your dad go? He's been your dad for thirty years. What about me? I loved him my whole life. You and Ting Ting both have long lives ahead that you'll both face together. Your dad is my world. Don't you think if there was a cure I would be the first to risk my life to save your dad?' Zhang Yu said.

Qin Song heard his mum's painful sob and turned around to hug his mum. 'Mum... you still have me.'

Zhang Yu sobbed and hugged her son at the same time. 'Song Song, I'm begging you... don't force your dad to have a third surgery. I can't bear to continue watching your dad go through more suffering.'

Qin Song didn't say another word. He felt like he was a mountain that was engulfed by an ocean.

Qin Song let his mum go. He sunk on a chair and felt hopeless like a submerged mountain.

Han Ting Ting barged through the door of the hospital meeting room. She was in a panic state and didn't have time to absorb the grieving atmosphere in the hospital meeting room. 'Song Song! Dad... dad threw up a lot of blood!'

Zhang Yu rushed out and ran to her husband's hospital room.

Qin Song held Ting Ting's sweaty hand and chased after his mum.

Qin Song and Ting Ting ran for a little while then she stopped running. He turned around and saw her face was bleached white and her forehead was sweaty.

‘Honey, what’s wrong?’ Qin Song asked.

Qin Song saw Ting Ting struggled to keep her eyes opened and there were no sounds coming out of her mouth. He caught her limp body before she fainted.

When Han Ting Ting regained consciousness, it was night time.

Han Ting Ting laid on a comfortable hospital bed. The room was spacious and the soft lighting made her drowsy. Above her bed was an air-conditioner that was turned on to keep the room not too cold and not too warm. The light from outside crept through the gap at the bottom of the door.

Han Ting Ting turned to the darker side of the room and saw Song Song sat by her bedside.

‘You’re awake?’ Qin Song asked. He gently swept Ting Ting’s hair away from her forehead. ‘Do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?’

Han Ting Ting shook her head. ‘Did I faint?’

Han Ting Ting remembered Song Song was holding her hand running toward his dad’s room. Whilst she was running she kept remembering how his dad threw up blood on the pillow and bed. Then her body felt weak and she became dizzy. The last thing she remembered was Song Song’s scared look and he held her in his arms.

Han Ting Ting forced herself to remember what else happened before she was unconscious but Song Song kept distracting her with his wide smile.

Song Song’s intense stare at Han Ting Ting made her anxious. ‘Is there something wrong... with me?’

Qin Song hugged Ting Ting from the front and rested his forehead on her forehead. His smiling lips hovered over her lips. ‘You dummy. We’re going to be parents... My dummy Ting Bao, our baby’s in your tummy.’

Han Ting Ting’s eyes were filled with immense happiness.

‘Seriously?’ Han Ting Ting asked.

Han Ting Ting rubbed her stomach but there was nothing but a flat stomach.

Where would there be room for a baby under her flat stomach?

‘It’s true! The doctor said that our baby is six weeks old and our baby is healthy,’ Qin Song said in a choked voice.

Qin Song lifted Ting Ting on his lap. She leaned back on his chest. He gently hugged her and made sure he didn’t put any pressure on her stomach.

Qin Song felt that night was both the worst and best night of his life. That night he accepted he was going to lose his dad and received the news he was going to be a dad. He felt like strong waves were crashing his heart, he couldn’t control the combined forces of intense pain and joy.

Qin Song didn’t know that kind of feeling existed. A whole new life conceived from his and Ting Ting’s fated love. He didn’t know what their baby looked like but he already loved their baby unconditionally.

Qin Song realised that in the last thirty years, his dad loved him the same way he loved his and Ting Ting’s conceived baby.

Qin Song felt he was a fool. He wasted too many years doubting his dad’s unconditional love for him. Why was it when he found out the meaning of a father’s unconditional love, it was too late?

‘Song Song... you...’ Han Ting Ting asked hesitantly.

‘What?’ Qin Song asked whilst he was still flooded with intense feelings.

‘You... don’t want our baby?’ Han Ting Ting asked in a choked voice.

‘How’s that possible?’ Qin Song asked. He tilted his head to the side to look at Ting Ting. ‘I’m so happy about our baby that I’ve forgotten who I am.’

‘But looking at you, you don’t seem happy one bit,’ Han Ting Ting said softly.

‘Ting Bao!’ Qin Song called out. He swallowed his intention to scold Ting Ting for doubting how much he loved her and their baby. ‘If I was in my dad’s shoes and there was no chance for a full recovery, would you have the heart to... help me to suffer less so I can live peacefully before I die?’

Han Ting Ting was surprised by Song Song’s sudden question. She thought about what she would do if she was in his mum’s shoes. ‘If I could ease a patient’s suffering I wouldn’t hesitate to help. But if it was you, I don’t know if I

could do the same for you... Song Song, mum must be beyond heartbroken!’

Qin Song stared at Ting Ting for a long time. He felt if he was separated from her, every second he couldn’t see her would make it hard for him to breathe. His dad loved and doted on his mum for decades longer than he’d loved Ting Ting. How much pain did his mum go through to decide to let his dad go?

Qin Song wished that in his and Ting Ting’s lives, they never have to face the same dilemma his parents faced. He never wanted to be forced to separate from Ting Ting.

The doctor came to examine Song Song and Han Ting Ting’s baby again. The doctor said that for a six week fetus it was healthier and more active than other fetuses its own age. It made Han Ting Ting realised why recently she ate a lot and still felt hungry, and why she slept a lot and still felt she didn’t get enough sleep.

Qin Song asked the doctor about everything he needed to do to ensure Ting Ting and their baby were both safe. By the time he returned to Ting Ting’s hospital room she was asleep. Her breathing was even and her cheeks were a healthy pink. He put the bed sheet over her body up to her neck, kissed her forehead and stepped softly outside.

Qin Song went to his dad’s hospital room. He stood in front of the door with his hand on the door handle for a long time before he opened it and entered his dad’s room.

Qin Yun was sleeping but he was frowning in his sleep.

Qin Song was spoiled by his family and he used to deliberately provoke his dad’s anger. But after he found out he was going to be a dad, he realised it was rare for a dad to stay angry at their own child.

Qin Yun woke up when he felt something was in front of his bed. He opened his eyes and saw his son standing in front of his bed in a trance. ‘What time is it?’

Qin Song looked at the watch Ting Ting gave him. ‘It’s nine.’

‘Um,’ Qin Yun said.

‘Dad, soon you’ll be promoted to be a grandpa,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Yun's complexion was pale but his eyes lit up. 'Ting Ting's pregnant?'

Qin Song nodded his head. 'Our baby's six weeks old, we found out today.' He took out an ultrasound photo from his pocket and passed it to his dad. 'Dad this is your grandchild.'

The ultrasound photo of Qin Song and Ting Ting's baby was blurry. If the doctor didn't show them where their baby was in the photo then they couldn't see the outline of their baby's little body. Qin Song was amused by his dad looking carefully at the photo more than he would look at an annual financial report.

Qin Yun smiled. 'My grandchild looks exactly like you!'

Qin Song's voice choked. 'We don't know if our baby is a boy or girl yet. The doctor said when our baby is five months we can find out... dad, it's just five months!'

Qin Yun stared at his son and many fond memories of his son's childhood played in his mind. 'It doesn't matter if the baby is a boy or a girl. But I prefer to have a granddaughter. My granddaughter would be beautiful and loveable like my daughter-in-law... whereas my grandson would be a trouble maker like my son.'

Qin Song was remembering his childhood too. He smiled with his dad and felt sorry for causing his dad so much grief.

Qin Yun wasn't used to being awake and not seeing his childish wife by his bedside. 'Where's your mum?'

'Mum went home to tidy up the place,' Qin Song said. He retrieved the photo and held his dad's hand. 'Dad, let's go home!'

End of Chapter Fourteen (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Fourteen (Part 2 of 2)

The last weekend of April, on a sunny day.

A car was waiting downstairs for Han Ting Ting and Song Song. The elevator coming up but she wanted to carry her own bag. She didn't have morning sickness but she slept a lot and ate as much as Song Song ate. Her body felt healthier than it did before she was pregnant.

Ting's mum said that when she was pregnant with Ting Ting, she had the same symptoms as Ting Ting. But Ting's mum was still worried about her first unborn grandchild and wanted reassurance from Song Song. 'Have you noticed anything abnormal about Ting Ting since she's pregnant?'

Qin Song hesitated for a while then whispered in Ting's mum's ear. 'Ting Ting's temperament... isn't as good as before, does that count?'

Ting's mum smiled secretly and nodded her head.

Ting's dad stood quietly next to his wife as he watched Ting Ting and Song Song enter the elevator. He rubbed his temples, he was more worried about Ting Ting's pregnancy than he did about work.

'I-can-hold-my-bag!' Han Ting Ting protested. She pulled her bag back from Song Song. 'You don't let me do anything. Now you won't let me hold my own bag too. I'm not made of glass, I'm not going to break easily.'

Qin Song sighed. Of course he knew Ting Ting wasn't going to break holding her bag but he was still worried it'd be too heavy for her.

Han Ting Ting regretted her sudden outburst. She realised she was being unreasonable so she smiled at Song Song to butter him up for him to let her outburst slide.

Qin Song didn't mind Ting Ting's mood swings. He still loved her no matter what mood she was in and knew it was the pregnancy hormones that were affecting her.

Han Ting Ting was worried she annoyed Song Song because he didn't say anything. She leaned on his shoulder and explained her feelings. 'Song Song, the baby and I are both strong and healthy. The pregnancy books I read said that I should do light exercise during pregnancy to have a smoother childbirth.'

Qin Song gave Ting Ting a sly smile. They were alone in the elevator and he hugged her gently and whispered in her ear. 'Ok... it's been a while since we've exercised together. Why don't we do light exercises together tonight for you to have a smoother childbirth?'

Han Ting Ting was embarrassed Song Song was teasing her blatantly in public and tried to escape from his hug. She felt it was a pity pregnancy hormones didn't give her extra strength. 'The doctor said we have to wait until after three months.'

Qin Song didn't let Ting Ting off the hook. 'The doctor also said during the first semester it's important that pregnant women should take it easy. Will you listen to me when I stop you from carrying heavy items?'

'I promise in the future I'll listen to you. I know I was unreasonable,' Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting agreed easily to Song Song's request because there were cameras in the elevator and the doors could open anytime. She didn't want to be caught in a compromising position with Song Song in the elevator.

Qin Song was happy Ting Ting obliged easily, but after teasing her, he was turned on himself. He bent his head and kissed her deeply and didn't let her go until the elevator reached ground floor. She was still flustered as they exit the elevator, he couldn't resist and carried her and their baby in his arms.

The driver who had been employed by the Qin household for decades was happy to see Mr Qin junior and Mrs Qin junior's sweet public display of affection. Mrs Qin junior wrapped her arms around Mr Qin junior's neck and she hid her face on Mr Qin junior's chest. The driver opened the car door to help the sweet couple enter the car.

Qin Song noticed a black S600 model car parked near his and Ting Ting's car. A tall man who wore a casual black shirt with the sleeves rolled up to show off buff tanned arms, stepped out of the black car. The man smiled at him and Ting Ting,

and his heart warned him – ‘your love rival returned.’

Qin Song carefully let Ting Ting sit comfortably in the back seat of their car. He kissed her flushed pink cheek. ‘Honey, wait for me a bit. I want to say something to him before we leave.’

‘Wait...’ Han Ting Ting said and pulled Song Song into the car.

‘I promise I won’t fight with him,’ Qin Song said and winked at Ting Ting.

Chen Yi Feng from a distance was amused by Han Ting Ting’s reluctance to let her husband near him after their fight at Commander Zhang’s mansion.

Qin Song approached Chen Yi Feng. Qin Song took out a signed non-negotiable cheque from his customised wallet and waved the cheque proudly in front of Chen Yi Feng’s face.

Chen Yi Feng laughed at little Qin Song’s usual transparent display of arrogance. Chen Yi Feng reached into his car a set of documents and dumped it on little Qin Song’s hands.

Qin Song flicked through the documents and gloated. ‘It’s a lot less than I thought it would be. If it was me it would have been more than two percent. Chen Yi Feng, it turns out I overestimated you.’

Chen Yi Feng laughed loudly and punched little Qin Song. ‘You think it was easy to play your greedy uncles?’

Chen Yi Feng had secretly asked Yuan Yi Yi to help put pressure on little Qin Song’s uncles to have no choice but give all their resources to him. But Chen Yi Feng had paid a high price to earn the trust of Qin Song’s uncles and being in their company made him cringe.

‘When did you know?’ Chen Yi Feng asked.

Qin Song gave Chen Yi Feng a condescending look. ‘I knew the moment you arrived in my district. You’ve been lusting after Liang’s company for many years. Your sudden change in business tactics was out of character. Besides, as if you could make a big impact in my district. Your indifferent attitude to directly oppose Liang’s company gave you away.’ He smiled proudly. ‘It was obvious you’re Yuan Yi Yi’s business mentor. Her work style is similar to yours, except she

has less self-control than you. I dangled some of my Liang's company shares in front of her, she thought I was serious and fell for my trap. Before she could lay eyes on the shares, her arm was nearly chopped off by Chen Yu Bai.'

'Hey,' Chen Yi Feng said. He remembered how Yuan Yi Yi panicked and went to ask her older brother for help when Chen Yu Bai dealt with her directly. He smiled at her gullibility. 'Little Qin Song you better watch out. Yi Yi is my best student, she's not that easy to cross as you think. She was momentarily excited about getting her hands on Liang's company shares that was why she fell for your trap. If you didn't have Chen Yu Bai in your corner then you would have bite off more than you can chew.'

'The person who should watch out for Yuan Yi Yi is you,' Qin Song warned. He waved the documents in his hand. 'Thanks you for your hard work. Keep the cheque. I've never owed anyone anything in my life before.'

Qin Song knew that Chen Yi Feng helped him because of Ting Ting. That was why he wanted to give Chen Yi Feng the cheque to pay back the favour, also in the future he didn't want Chen Yi Feng to have anything to hold over his head.

Chen Yi Feng smoked a cigarette and looked at Han Ting Ting who sat in the backseat of the car parked nearby. He knew she was keeping an eye on him and her husband through the back of the car window view. 'You don't have to thank me. It's my wedding gift to Ting Bao.'

Chen Yi Feng flipped his lighter opened and silver light flared. The cheque in Chen Yi Feng's hand was lit on fire.

Qin Song who was infamous for being generous was stunned Chen Yi Feng burnt the cheque because the cheque figure was something neither he nor Chen Yi Feng should sneeze at.

'Think of it as my early birthday gift to Ting Bao's baby,' Chen Yi Feng said. The ashes of the burnt cheque fell onto the ground. 'Congratulations to you and Ting Bao on becoming parents.'

Qin Song composed himself and grudgingly nodded his head. 'Thanks.'

'Let me say farewell to Ting Bao,' Chen Yi Feng said. He flicked his cigarette onto the ground. 'I'm leaving tonight.'

When Han Ting Ting saw Chen Yi Feng punched Song Song, she almost jumped out of the car to stop them from fighting. Since she witnessed their violent fight at Song Song's granddad's mansion, it always made her body shake thinking about how badly they both could have been injured.

Han Ting Ting was glad straight after the punch Chen Yi Feng and Song Song looked like they reconciled and talked civilly to each other.

A while later Qin Song knocked on the window of his and Ting Ting's car that was wound half down. He hunched over the window and reluctantly passed on Chen Yi Feng's request to her. 'He wants to say a few words to you. Honey, if you feel tired don't force yourself.'

Ting Ting didn't hesitate to step out the car and Qin Song pouted. He asked the driver to help bring down their packed suitcases to give her and Chen Yi Feng a brief private moment to talk.

Chen Yi Feng rubbed Han Ting Ting's head and gave her a gentle smile.

'Ting Bao, you'll be a mum soon,' Chen Yi Feng said and sighed. 'The first time I saw you, you were just born, you were a tiny wrinkled baby monkey and so light that I didn't dare hold you. I blinked for a second and the years flashed by. Time passes by quickly and now you're about to give birth to another baby monkey.'

Han Ting Ting smiled awkwardly, gently rubbed her small baby bump and didn't know what to say.

Chen Yi Feng noticed Han Ting Ting's pregnancy glow. Her cheeks were fuller and had a healthy pink complexion. There was a sign of maturity to her heart shaped face. He clenched his hands and slowly opened it to let go his deepest regret.

'Song Song told me that you were on his side all along instead of opposing him,' Han Ting Ting said. 'Last time at granddad and grandmother's house, I didn't know and said those hurtful words to you. I'm sorry. Please don't be angry at me.'

Chen Yi Feng gave Han Ting Ting a serious look to tease her. 'What's there to be angry about? It wouldn't make a difference if I told you the truth because you

wouldn't have believed me anyway.'

'That's not true! It's not that I didn't trust you, you know that...' Han Ting Ting said.

Chen Yi Feng had known Han Ting Ting since she was born. Each time she was tensed and wanted to explain her inner thoughts she'd jumbled her words but he always knew what she wanted to say before she spoke. He'd memorised all her little gestures and adorable traits. The memories he had of her were beautiful memories that he treasured in his heart. He gently patted her head. 'I know. I know what a good person you are. There's no one that knows that more than me.' He paused. He suppressed what his heart really wanted to declare to her and chose something else that wouldn't burden her. 'All these years you and Dong Dong share the same importance in my heart.'

Chen Yi Feng saw that Han Ting Ting avoided eye contact with him and was relieved she didn't see the despair in his eyes.

'Ting Bao, call me uncle. You've always called me by my name that's no way to treat your elder. It didn't matter in the past but now I'm about to be promoted to great-uncle, you can't set a bad example for your baby monkey,' Chen Yi Feng said in a choked voice.

Chen Yi Feng felt it wasn't as hard to add more distance between him and Han Ting Ting, except his heart felt more broken than he imagined.

Han Ting Ting never saw Chen Yi Feng's lingering stare. By the time she looked at him, he gave her his usual gentle smile he reserved for her. He wanted her to believe that it was she that loved him one sidedly, but the truth was he loved her more than she ever knew.

Han Ting Ting looked at Chen Yi Feng's familiar smile and felt that she didn't have any feelings left for him and there was nothing left to let go. 'Uncle!'

'Ting Bao is good,' Chen Yi Feng said softly. He gave Han Ting Ting a polite hug that an uncle would give their niece. 'Ting Bao... make sure you live happily. If anything bad happens don't feel scared, come straight to me and tell me. If I can help you I would definitely help. I... uncle just need you to be happy and it's enough. Remember to listen to my advice.'

It was the first time Han Ting Ting heard Chen Yi Feng spoke that lacked confidence, it confused her. Before she dwelled on his words, he returned to the confident Chen Yi Feng that she was familiar with.

‘Ok, if uncle doesn’t leave now your wild husband will make mincemeat out of me,’ Chen Yi Feng teased.

Chen Yi Feng escorted Han Ting Ting back into hers and little Qin Song’s car. Chen Yi Feng closed the door and turned around to see little Qin Song’s obvious display of jealousy. Chen Yi Feng pushed little Qin Song hard enough for little Qin Song to hit the boot of the car. Chen Yi Feng pulled the front of little Qin Song’s shirt and Chen Yi Feng leaned down to threaten little Qin Song through gritted teeth. ‘I can let Ting Bao go, but I’m always willing to take her back! The price you have to pay for hurting her is one hundred thousand times more painful than you can imagine... little Qin Song, you better not do anything to hurt her!’

Qin Song let Chen Yi Feng finish and shamelessly framed Chen Yi Feng the moment his shirt was released. ‘Honey, come save me! Chen Yi Feng wants to kill the father of your child!’

Chen Yi Feng saw Han Ting Ting jumped out the car to rush over to the opportunistic little Qin Song’s side. Chen Yi Feng could only laugh helplessly and speed off in his car before he was beaten up by a pregnant woman.

Chen Yi Feng drove during peak traffic. But he didn’t mind and smoked one cigarette after the next to ease his heartbreak a little.

Chen Yi Feng’s car was thick with smoke, he closed his eyes and remembered the time Yuan Yi Yi pouted and asked him a question he asked himself a thousand times. ‘You’ve pretended to be blind and deaf to your Ting Bao’s feelings for you for many years. Now that you want to accept her feelings, Qin Song appeared in her life and it’s too late for you. Do you feel regret you never seized your chance at the right moment?’

Chen Yi Feng felt that the moment Qin Song entered Han Ting Ting’s life, he was finally able to let go of his regret of not accepting Han Ting Ting’s feelings.

Chen Yi Feng felt that Han Ting Ting was in her prime, she deserved to have a

blossoming love with a man like Qin Song who was a good person and also in their prime. Chen Yi Feng didn't want Han Ting Ting to waste her prime on him who was passed their prime. Chen Yi Feng wasn't that greedy, he had her love when he was in his prime. But time was cruel, it never allowed him to return to the past to relive those beautiful memories.

Chen Yi Feng accelerated on the highway that finally opened up. His face no longer revealed his inner suffering and he drove straight ahead without once looking back.

End of Chapter Fourteen (Part 2 of 2)

Related

part 1

Chapter Fifteen (Part 1)

Qin Song and Ting Ting didn't employ servants at their house. His work commitments meant he'd work overtime many nights. He worried about leaving her home alone whilst she was pregnant. After discussing with each other what they should do, they both agreed they would live at his parents' house until the birth of their child.

Zhang Yu saw her son and her favourite daughter-in-law arrived in her home and rushed to her daughter-in-law's side. 'Ting Bao, finally we can live together again.'

Qin Yun from the living room laughed at his wife's favouritism of their daughter-in-law over their son. 'Zhang Yu stop hogging Ting Ting, can't you see our son's long face?'

Zhang Yu glanced at her son and saw his reluctance to share Ting Ting with her. She wasn't pleased with her son's possessiveness and glared at him then pulled Ting Ting into the living room.

It was a full house at Qin Yun and Zhang Yu's home. Commander Zhang came to visit his son-in-law Qin Yun. Commander Zhang saw his daughter Zhang Yu competing with his grandson Qin Song over his loveable granddaughter-in-law Ting Ting and wanted to tease his daughter. 'Zhang Yu, Ting's mum's been busy all morning in the kitchen but I haven't seen you stepped foot in the kitchen. Now that Ting Ting's here you're more excited than Ting's mum. Why do you get to have the best of both worlds?'

'Dad, why didn't I see you helping in the kitchen either?' Zhang Yu asked her dad who liked to pick on her. She gave both her dad and son the cold shoulder. She went to pour a warm cup of tea for Ting Ting. 'Ting Bao drink a little tea, our little Qin bun in your tummy is probably thirsty.'

Mrs Zhang senior laughed at her daughter Zhang Yu's one track mind. 'Hasn't our little Qin bun been given a name?'

‘Ting’s mum picked a nickname for our little Qin bun already, Shun Shun (obedient),’ Qin Song said and proudly rubbed Ting Ting’s baby bump.

Han Ting Ting smiled at Song Song’s obvious boasting. ‘Dad, Song Song and I want you to give Shun Shun a proper name.’

Everyone unanimously nodded their heads in agreement.

Qin Yun pulled his wife to sit down to stop her from crowding Ting Ting. ‘I’ve thought of a name for Shun Shun. Let’s call our Shun Shun, Qin Han. It’s both easy on the ear and meaningful. Qin Han is suitable for a boy or a girl.’ He turned to face Ting’s parents. ‘Unless Ting’s parents would like to name Shun Shun, Han Qin I wouldn’t object.’

The living room was filled with laughter, because they knew Qin Song would object based on the stunned look on Qin Song’s face.

Qin Song leaned his head on Ting Ting’s shoulder. He wanted time to stop at that happy moment with everyone in the same room teasing one another and laughing together.

The days gradually became warmer and by June Han Ting Ting’s baby bump was hard to hide. The doctors informed her and Song Song that their baby was a boy. Whenever she went for checkups and ultrasounds, the doctors complimented their baby boy. When their baby boy was three months the doctors said that their baby boy was growing faster and healthier than a four month fetus. That meant by the time she gave birth they said he’d be a healthy and energetic boy.

The days Qin Yun was unconscious was becoming longer than the days he was awake. When he woke up from his recent deep sleep, he was overjoyed to hear that his grandson was healthy and active. ‘No one understands me but my grandson. Shun Shun knows how frail my body is so he cheers me up by growing into a healthy baby and that gives me strength when I’m awake.’

Zhang Yu who was beside her husband felt immense sadness but forced herself to smile in front of him. ‘Is that so? Then you keep up your strength. It’s only right that you hand deliver a birthday gift to our healthy and active grandson

Shun Shun.'

Qin Yun understood his wife well and knew she was doing her best to stay strong for him. He pinched her cheek that was sore from forcing herself to smile. She lovingly lightly hit his hand. Suddenly they both heard a splash noise.

Han Ting Ting caught a fish but didn't know how the fish escaped. The escaped fish was swimming comfortably in the fish pond. She was upset her caught fish dared to swim away and threw her fishing rod on the ground.

Qin Yun and Zhang Yu were resting and holding hands nearby. They laughed loudly when they saw their daughter-in-law's sudden outburst, it reminded them of their son.

Qin Song arrived at the fish pond and his eyes were treated to a gentle warm setting that moved hearts. The sunset lit streaks of red and orange across the summer sky, the cool breeze fluttered the leaning willow trees and their shadows in the water looked like graceful ripples. Under a willow tree, his dad sat back on a chair and his mum leaned on the back of the chair and hugged his dad. His parents were laughing happily. But his Ting Bao with her big baby bump stood holding her back and looked like she was in a bad mood.

'What fish had the guts to upset my Ting Bao?' Qin Song asked. He walked toward Ting Ting. 'Tonight we'll cook its flesh.'

Qin Yun turned to face his son and there was a hint of pink on his pale cheeks. 'That's going to be hard. We've been here the whole afternoon and only one fish took the bait but escaped.'

The fish pond was a man-made pond in his parents' garden. There weren't many fish in the pond to catch.

Qin Song reached Ting Ting and kissed her pouted lips. Then he took off his shoes and socks and rolled up his pants hems. He jumped into the fish pond and a butler passed him a landing net handle. He hopped around in the pond like a brave monkey and he used the landing net handle to scoop up a fish for Ting Ting.

'To your left!' Zhang Yu cried out.

'Song Song, quickly look below your feet!' Han Ting Ting advised.

Qin Song was drenched but he didn't give up. His persistence paid off and he scooped a fish the size of his hand into the net at the end of the landing net handle. He returned to land like a heroic fisherman that caught the best catch of the day.

Qin Song hooked the fish to the end of Ting Ting's fishing rod that was thrown on the ground. 'Honey, you caught a fish.'

Han Ting Ting's good mood returned, held up her fishing rod and pleased to see it was the fish that escaped.

Qin Yun and Zhang Yu applauded their son's sacrifice to make their daughter-in-law happy and in turn made their Shun Shun happy too.

On the dinner menu that night included the fish that dared to put the pregnant Mrs Qin junior in a bad mood. Zhang Yu picked the fish eye to put into Qin Yun's bowl but Qin Yun gave it back to Zhang Yu. Zhang Yu didn't bother to pretend to be polite and swallowed the fish eye.

Han Ting Ting didn't dare to eat fish eye. Song Song took out all the fish bones and fed the fish meat to her. She felt it was the most delicious fish she tasted.

Qin Song stepped out of the bathroom and saw Ting Ting sat on their bed. She gave him an intense gaze. He looked down at his body for anything unusual. 'Is there something stuck on me?'

Han Ting Ting was in a trance remembering how Song Song looked when he came out of the fish pond, he looked too handsome that she drooled. 'Song Song, when you were fishing you looked handsome!'

Qin Song's heart was overflowed with sweetness. He sat on the bed and gave Ting Ting a towel. She knelt beside him and dried his hair.

'After I give birth, will you still catch fish for me?' Han Ting Ting asked. 'My mum said that while I'm pregnant I need to ask you for rain and wind, because men only listen to women while they're pregnant. Do you agree?'

Qin Song nearly choked on his own laughter. 'What do you think?'

'I don't think it's true. Dad dotes on mum unconditionally,' Han Ting Ting said.

‘Um,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song was distracted by Ting Ting’s body position as she dried his hair. She had to lean over him to reach the top of his head. It meant that he was face to face with her soft snow white breasts that were fuller by the day. Her night shirt was thin and her soft breasts grazed his lips in sync with her drying hand movements. It was like his lips were teased by two hot crossed buns. He decided to savour them for dessert and lifted his head to kiss her throat.

Han Ting Ting’s throat felt ticklish. She lifted the towel from Song Song’s head and saw his eyes turned into a wolf’s pair of eyes. ‘Ah!’ She moved to sit on the edge of the bed.

Qin Song grabbed Ting Ting’s hip and pulled her back to him. ‘You haven’t finished drying my hair. Where are you going?’

Han Ting Ting knew that Song Song fasted for three months and he wasn’t going to let her escape tonight. The anticipation before he made his moves made her body tingled. She covered her face with the towel and could smell his natural masculine scent mixed with the shampoo fragrance, it made her face hotter. She decided to go against her conscience. ‘Your hair’s already dried. I’m sleepy.’

Ting Ting’s shyness was appealing to Qin Song’s middle name ‘play,’ he wasn’t just renowned for his snowman building skills. He grabbed her hand. ‘You haven’t dried here.’

Song Song pressed Han Ting Ting’s hand against one big package that was hot. She pulled back her hand and hit his shoulder. He got rid of her thin night shirt before she could jump off the bed. His hard body pressed her soft body onto the bed...

Since that summer night the fish pond owned by the Qin household was replenish with more fish each summer.

Summer went by fast and the cooler autumn knocked on the door. It was hard to avoid the cold autumn breeze at night. A black car spiralled through an empty quiet road and the wheels flattened the fallen autumn leaves scattered on the road. The car windows were down and the wind rustled through the car

windows passed Qin Song's half closed dark eyes.

Qin Song arrived home past ten at night. He followed the stair rail to stagger upstairs.

Han Ting Ting was asleep but heard the bedroom door creak opened and forced herself to sit up on the bed. 'Song Song?'

'Um,' Qin Song said. He crawled onto the bed and laid down. 'Honey, I'm sorry. I drank again tonight. Shun Shun, daddy's home.'

Han Ting Ting turned on the lights and took off Song Song's tie. He reached for Putt Putt and used Putt Putt's stomach as a pillow. He closed his eyes to rest. She wrung a wet towel dry and wiped his face. Then she brought water for him to drink but she couldn't get him to sit up to drink.

Qin Song pointed to Ting Ting's lips then pointed at his lips. He gave her a sly smile. 'Honey, I want to drink from your lips.'

'You don't want to drink water? Ok, I'll take it away,' Han Ting Ting threatened.

Qin Song pouted. 'Go ahead and take it away.' He rubbed his face on Putt Putt's legs. He rolled on the bed and felt thirsty. 'Water... water...'

Han Ting Ting sighed. She sipped water and transferred the water to Song Song's mouth. He got to drink water but became greedy, he licked the remaining drops of water off her tongue. He gripped her left hand and when she felt a cold sensation on her ring finger he let her go. She bent down, looked at her left hand and found a new ring on her ring finger. She didn't know the price of the ring. It was shaped as a heart and the light reflected off the diamonds and realised it wasn't cheap.

'My Ting Bao is good,' Qin Song said. He licked his lips and could still taste Ting Ting from their recent kiss. 'Do you remember what day it is?'

The new ring kept Han Ting Ting in a trance and her tongue wasn't careful with words as she was before she received the new ring. 'Today is the day we agreed to divorce.'

In the morning Han Ting Ting went for a checkup and on her file she saw the date and realised it was hers and Song Song's one year anniversary and also their

original agreed date to divorce. She smiled at the thought that fate was indeed magical. Three hundred and sixty-five days ago she felt she couldn't love Song Song. But three hundred and sixty-five days later her heart was flooded with happiness because she was carrying his child.

Qin Song's spring mood was dampened to a dreary winter mood. He shamelessly rubbed Ting Ting's ballooned baby bump. 'Look at how big the evidence that our agreement was cancelled. Do you really think I was going to fulfil our original agreement terms?'

Ting Ting put two protective hands over her baby bump. Qin Song laughed and pulled her closer to kiss her. 'Today is our one year wedding anniversary. I married a dummy for a full year.'

Han Ting Ting in that moment cried happy tears. Their planned divorce date started from their wedding day. She only remembered it was their anniversary in the morning. She fiddled her new ring that she loved because it was given to her by Song Song... it also made her feel guilty. 'I didn't prepare a gift for you.'

'Isn't this a gift?' Qin Song asked. He put Ting Ting's hand over her baby bump. 'Shun Shun is the best gift you can give me, nothing else can compare. Ting Bao, tonight I entertained the guests with Rong Yan. That former player praised me.' He rubbed her belly and smiled proudly. 'If judged by the speed and accuracy of attacks hitting the target than none of my sworn brothers can surpass me.'

Song Song lifted his chin as though he conquered the world. Han Ting Ting laughed at his boastful nature. She leaned closer to him and kissed him. 'Let's have another baby before our second anniversary. Song Song, I want to give you many children that are good natured.'

Ting Ting rarely initiated kisses and declared her inner feelings. Tonight she did both and when she said she wanted to give Qin Song many children with such a serious tone it made his nose sting. He remembered his mum told him that his dad couldn't bear seeing his mum go through the pain of giving birth to another child after he was born. What was the point of having many children? He was an exemplary example. What have he done but provoked his dad and made his dad worry about him for decades? He couldn't even be as strong as his mum and make tough decisions like to give his dad what he needed most, his mum was

prepared to sacrifice losing her fated love for his dad to not suffer anymore.

‘Ting Bao, I don’t need too many children. I just need you to be with me the rest of my life,’ Qin Song said. He brushed through Ting Ting’s hair. ‘I’ll devote the rest of my life to you. If I’m lucky to go before you, when that day comes you can’t resent me for leaving you behind on your own.’

‘Um. Work on treating me well first, everything else when the time comes we’ll discuss it then,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song pinched Ting Ting’s pink cheeks. ‘Why are you always smart when I want to extract promises from you?’

End of Chapter Fifteen (Part 1)

Related

part 2

Chapter Fifteen (Part 2)

Qin Yun's painkillers helped him endure his pain post surgeries. The days that he was awake he got to play and eat together with Zhang Yu and appeared to be energetic. But as winter set in, it was harder for his body to cope despite eating nutritious food and resting often.

Han Ting Ting was expected to give birth on the second last day of December, it was less than a month away. Shun Shun was healthy and moved around a lot in her tummy. It was because Shun Shun had a healthy appetite that caused her weight to balloon enough to make her dizzy. She freaked when she saw their combined body weight was seventy-five kilograms. Her baby bump was too big for her small frame and most days it was hard for her to stand straight on even ground.

The last semester of Ting Ting's pregnancy was especially stressful for Qin Song.

When the first day of snow arrived, Qin Song was in no mood to build snow people as he did the previous year.

Qin Song returned home and stopped by his parents' bedroom first. His dad was sleeping deeply. Under the warm lighting his dad's face was still manly and handsome but his dad's sunken cheeks caused his heart to wither. He softly closed his dad's bedroom door and went to look for Ting Ting. He found her crying pitifully on the bed.

'Honey, what's wrong? You can't fall asleep?' Qin Song asked. He sat beside Ting Ting on the bed. He rubbed her plumper back. 'Tell me where you feel uncomfortable?'

'My whole body aches. Song Song, I think I'm about to die,' Han Ting Ting said.

It took a lot of energy for Han Ting Ting to turn her body to sob on Song Song's shoulder. She felt her body was heavy, she couldn't stand properly or sleep. No matter what position she rolled herself on the bed, she couldn't get into a

comfortable sleeping position. It was worse when she woke up from a nap, her heavy body would ache more from tossing and turning during her nap.

Qin Song coaxed Ting Ting to go back to sleep. After a while she still had trouble sleeping, he lifted her into his arms and paced back and forth in their room.

Han Ting Ting stopped crying. She rested her head on Song Song's shoulder and slowly became drowsy.

Outside Qin Song and Ting Ting's room, it was snowing heavily and the winds were violent. He felt the same turmoil in his heart. He never felt as helpless as he did that night. When he was younger he thought he could control everything that happened in his life but recently he realised there were many things out of his control. He couldn't give up his life for his dad and he couldn't be the one suffering pregnancy pains instead of Ting Ting.

Qin Song felt that men truly matured after they started their own family.

'You can put me down,' Han Ting Ting said softly. 'I'm ok. Song Song, have you eaten dinner?'

Qin Song boosted Ting Ting's body in his arms and nodded his head. 'I ate at a work banquet before.'

Qin Song gently hit Ting Ting's bottom and he was in the mood to tease her. 'Honey, stop thrashing about. Be careful or I'll loosen my hold on you and you'll fall.'

'Then let me go,' Han Ting Ting said. 'Aren't I heavy?'

Qin Song knew truthfully answering the princess' sensitive question, who weighed more than seventy kilograms in his arms wasn't going to earn him brownie points.

Qin Song secretly clenched his teeth and kept smiling. 'However heavy my wife and son weighs I can still carry them.'

'Um. I know it's been tiring for you lately. I'm sorry I can't help you and for being a burden to you,' Han Ting Ting said softly and hid her distressed face on Song Song's shoulder.

Qin Song tilted his head to kiss Ting Ting's nose. 'Honey, it's been more tiring for you. Our son has been torturing you.'

'But we love our son more each day,' Han Ting Ting said. She wrapped her arms around Song Song's neck. 'Song Song, it's rare for parents not to love their own child.'

'I know,' Qin Song said. 'I love our son but it can't compare to how much more my dad loves me. I get it now, I don't have any regret left... I just don't want to be separated from my dad.'

Han Ting Ting hugged Song Song. 'You'll still have me and our son with you.'

Before the official date Qin Song and Han Ting Ting's son appeared in the world, Qin Shun Shun was a mighty baby. But Qin Shun Shun's true mighty strength wasn't revealed until he was born.

On the night of New Year's Eve, during the New Year countdown on tv, Han Ting Ting felt a painful contraction. At midnight the fireworks blossomed in the night sky, she grabbed onto Song Song's waist and moaned. 'It hurts!'

Qin Song was giving out red packets to the little critters lined up in front of him when he froze for two seconds after hearing Ting Ting's anguish voice. He lifted her in his arms and bolted to the car.

Han Ting Ting made it safely to the hospital operating room.

Qin Song was ready to punch one of the walls outside the operating room because his son was hurting his wife instead of him. But a moment later an obstetrician stepped out of the operating room. 'Congratulations! Both mother and son are healthy.'

'My daughter-in-law has given birth?' Zhang Yu asked anxiously.

'Um, everyone is good. It was a smooth delivery,' the obstetrician said.

Everyone wanted to ask the obstetrician more questions when a nurse stepped outside. In the nurse's arms was Qin Shun Shun wrapped in a blanket. Qin Shun Shun was holding his little hands together and crying louder than other newborns.

Qin Song finally got to see his precious son's little wrinkled face and was choked with joy, he stumbled back a step.

Zhang Yu reacted differently, she rushed to carry her grandson and the happiness that shone in her eyes lit up the hospital.

Qin Shun Shun's mum was wheeled out of the operating room toward the maternity ward. She looked worn out but her complexion was a healthy pink. Qin Song rushed to the gurney Ting Ting laid on, he held her sweaty face and in that moment he was able to process the exhilarating joy he felt. He leaned his forehead on her forehead and his eyes were more red and teary than hers.

'Our son... Ting Bao, thank you,' Qin Song said in a choked voice.

'Waaa waaa...' Qin Shun Shun cried.

The tranquil morning at the Qin household's home was broken by the sounds of crying of Qin Shun Shun. The crying was most sound and clear from his parents' spacious bed.

Ting Ting and Qin Song were hugging each other and blissfully sleeping in their bed. Her head was resting on his chest when a heart breaking cry woke up her tired body. She was about to get out of bed when he tightened his hold around her waist. He kept his eyes closed. 'Ignore him!'

A disgruntled Qin Song was grieving his lost sleep. He'd woken up to coax the little menace two or three times during the night and couldn't believe the little menace dared to disturb his and Ting Ting's precious sleeping time early in the morning. Who else was that inconsiderate but their little menacing son?

'Shun Shun's nappy is full that's why he's crying. Song Song, go back to sleep. I'll carry Shun Shun outside, we won't disturb you,' Han Ting Ting said.

Ting Ting gently patted Qin Song's cheek before lifting their son from the crib. He couldn't believe it was already their son's one month milestone. Their son's neck was soft and still fragile. Each time he held their son he made sure he supported their son's neck carefully. Their son lived a life of luxury, all the kiddo did was eat a lot, go through a tonne of nappies and cried loudly. Their son was definitely a little menace!

‘Shush... don’t cry. Daddy’s sleeping. Shun Shun don’t wake up daddy,’ Han Ting Ting coaxed.

Qin Song from the bed saw their son’s little face was red from crying and their son snuggled against Ting Ting’s chest. She looked at their son adoringly, it made him wanted to protest. He sat up on the bed. ‘Give him to the nanny. Honey, come back to bed and sleep with me.’

Qin Shun Shun could sense his daddy’s jealousy and immediately stopped crying. His dark eyes that looked like his daddy’s eyes stared pitifully into his mummy’s eyes. His misty eyes always melted his mummy’s heart, and knocked out his daddy’s control over his mummy’s attention... he won!

Ting Ting carried the little menace to the bathroom. Qin Song heard water running, gurgling sounds and her gentle gibberish to coax the little menace coming from the bathroom. He called out her name two times but she ignored him. He was jealous and felt neglected. He crawled under the bed sheet, inhaled her sweet scent that lingered on the pillow and went back to sleep.

Han Ting Ting changed little Qin Shun’s nappy and breast fed him. Afterward she carried him outside but Zhang Yu hurriedly walked toward them before they reached the stairs. Zhang Yu wore an outer robe over her night gown and Zhang Yu looked excited about something.

‘Ting Bao! Qin Yun’s awake! He said he wants to see Shun Shun. Can you bring Shun Shun into our room for them to spend time together?’ Zhang Yu said.

Han Ting Ting’s eyes stung. Qin Yun was unconscious for nearly a fortnight. During that fortnight if he woke up for a little while, he had no sense of his surroundings. Since Shun Shun was born, he only got to see Shun Shun two times and wasn’t able to hold Shun Shun yet.

Qin Yun was alert and was able to sit up against the headbed. He smiled the moment he saw Ting Ting and Shun Shun enter the room. ‘Let me hold my Shun Shun for a bit.’

Han Ting Ting nodded her head and held back her tears. Zhang Yu carried Shun Shun to the bed and placed Shun Shun gently in Qin Yun’s arms. Qin Yun stared adoringly at Shun Shun, his heart ached, he wasn’t ready to be separated from Shun Shun, he wanted be able to see Shun Shun grow up.

The heater was turned on and made the room toasty warm. Shun Shun was wrapped in a blanket and wore a light yellow baby onesie. Shun Shun's little chubby body was round like a duckling's tummy. It was too soon for Shun Shun to know how to laugh but the moment Shun Shun laid in Qin Yun's arms, Shun Shun laughed clearly whilst looking into Qin Yun's eyes.

A breath of spring essence entered Qin Yun's battered body, he laughed a jolly laugh.

'My Shun Shun's growing up fast!' Qin Yun said proudly. He looked up to face Ting Ting. 'The kiddo's probably a menace like his dad. You look more tired than when you were pregnant.'

Ting Ting didn't get a chance to say a word before Qin Song appeared behind her and answered in her stead. A butler had informed him that his dad was awake and he ran to his parents' room. His selective hearing only heard half the conversation. 'Dad, you don't know the half of it. Shun Shun eats and sleep most of the day. When he's awake he soils a tonne of nappies. From morning to night, Ting Ting and I can't get a minute peace with the kiddo around.'

'What else did you expect from your son? He's exactly like how you were when you were his age,' Qin Yun said.

'Mum, is that true?' Qin Song asked.

Zhang Yu bit her lips. 'I... I don't remember.'

When Zhang Yu gave birth to Qin Song she was twenty-two years old and still a naive girl. She was sheltered and doted on by her family. The scar on her stomach scared her to death. It took her body over a year to recover from the caesarean. During that period Qin Yun was busy with work, looked after her weak body and adamantly wanted Qin Song's crib to stay in their room. Day or night Qin Yun tended to Qin Song's every need. Qin Yun cherished Qin Song's every big and small milestones.

'Today is my grandson's one month. How do you and Ting Ting intend to celebrate Shun Shun's one month milestone?' Qin Yun asked.

'We don't want an extravagant celebration for Shun Shun's one month milestone. We're happy to have a simple family dinner gathering,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song stared adoringly at his little menace's chubby face sleeping like a little dummy and couldn't help but smile.

'Um, that sounds good. Zhang Yu, help me bring the things I prepared in my study room here,' Qin Yun said.

Zhang Yu went to Qin Yun's study room and returned with a thick pile of documents and a red jewellery box. Qin Song picked up Shun Shun into his arms. Qin Yun received the items from Zhang Yu. Qin Yun opened the jewellery box and inside was a vintage opal necklace.

'The necklace is for the first born son of each Qin generation. Qin Song and I wore it when we were Shun Shun's age,' Qin Yun explained. He gestured for Zhang Yu to put the necklace around Shun Shun's neck. He called Ting Ting to sit on the bed and gave her the documents. 'Ting Ting, this is mine and Zhang Yu's gift to you.'

Qin Yun gave ten percent of Qin's company shares to Ting Ting. Qin Yun owned thirty percent of Qin's company shares and he divided it equally for three people. When Qin Song took over Qin's company, he gave Qin Song ten percent of Qin's company shares and also gave Zhang Yu ten percent of Qin's company shares.

'I'm not giving you the shares because you gave me a grandson. I'd saved the shares for you long ago. Qin Song's hard to handle. He treats you well now but there's no guarantee what he'll be like in the future. He may have a momentary lapse of judgement and stray. The shares are for yours and Shun Shun's security and you don't have to put up with Qin Song if he treats you badly in the future,' Qin Yun said.

Ting Ting was stunned. Qin Song elbowed her from behind. 'Honey, accept it from dad.'

Han Ting Ting accepted the shares with shaky hands. 'Thank you dad.'

Qin Song carried Shun Shun outside and Ting Ting walked beside them. He sighed. 'A son after bringing a bride home is like a bowl of water thrown away. Honey, how are you so good and loveable? Everyone loves and dotes on you. This time dad helped you block my road from other beautiful snowflakes for the rest of my life.'

Han Ting Ting laughed softly. She picked up Shun Shun from Song Song's arms, Shun Shun was sleeping peacefully. 'Oh, so if I didn't have the shares in my hands you'll find opportunities outside to have 'a momentary lapse of judgement,' right?'

'I wouldn't dare,' Qin Song promised. He kissed Ting Ting and pressed her against a wall. 'As if there's anyone more loveable than my Ting Bao.' Their bodies were too close together and made Shun Shun woke up and 'waaa waaa' cries were heard. Ting Ting reacted quicker and pinched Qin Song's cheek then carried their son straight to their room. Qin Song was left behind frustrated enough to stomp his feet.

End of Chapter Fifteen (Part 2)

Related

part 3

Chapter Fifteen (Part 3 of 3)

The truth was apart from competing for Ting Ting's affections, Qin Song loved their son. He was proud to be Shun Shun's dad. The night of Shun Shun's one month milestone lunch celebration, Qin Song's relatives and friends were invited to his parents' home. Ting Ting recently gave birth and it wasn't convenient for her to stand too long. The whole night he carried Shun Shun in his arms around his parents' home for his relatives and friends to see his charming son.

That afternoon all the Liang's sworn brothers were present at the lunch banquet in honour of Qin Shun Shun. Qin Song felt proud he became a father at a younger age than when his sworn brothers first became fathers and shamelessly paraded and praised Shun Shun in front of them.

Ji Nan saw Qin Song's crazy peacock behaviour and turned to face Li Wei Ran who was beside her. 'Fifth brother, take a look at sixth brother. His motor mouth is about to fall to his gloves from all that boasting.'

Li Wei Ran nodded his head. 'Fourth brother you need to be more understanding of sixth brother's situation. That childish monkey suddenly got promoted to be a dad, it would be strange if he wasn't deliriously happy.'

Qin Song overheard Li Wei Ran's backhanded compliment and quickly turned around to insult his cousin. 'Men who are whipped by their wives don't have the right to talk in front of me.'

Big boss wanted to shoot down his sixth brother's annoying mouth and joined in the battle of words. 'Men who only have one son but are already giddy don't have the right to talk in front of me.'

When big boss' triplets were born, he used them to put Chen Yu Bai and Li Wei Ran in their places because they only had two children each.

Qin Song tilted his head to the ceiling and laughed loudly. 'Men who took seven years to become a dad have no right to talk in front of me.'

Qin Song felt he went easy on big boss because if he included the years big

boss was secretly in love with Gu Yan then it took big boss ten years before he became a dad of triplets.

Big boss, Ji Nan and Li Wei Ran were in disbelief they were defeated by their childish sixth brother.

The former player Rong Yan narrowed his eyes. 'Men who only have one naughty little son have nothing to be happy about.'

Qin Song was happy Rong Yan fell into his trap and triumphantly turned to face Rong Yan. 'Men who don't even have one son have no right to talk in front of me.'

Rong Yan wasn't affected by Qin Song's insult. Instead Rong Yan had a gleam in his eyes and glanced at Chen Yu Bai who stood opposite to them giving his darling daughter Chen An An a glass of water. The ice glacier Chen Yu Bai gave Qin Song an ice dagger and slowly lifted the bridge of his glasses with an index finger... Qin Shun Shun could sense that his daddy was in trouble with third uncle and opened his pair of dark eyes that had long eyelashes to give his daddy a pity look... Qin Song's legs became shaky and carried his son quickly to his wife... honey, save me! Third brother looked like he wanted to ship me off to a desert in the Middle East.

The Qin household hosted the lunch banquet for Qin Shun Shun all afternoon and at five in the evening Qin Shun Shun's dinner banquet officially started. During the most boisterous atmosphere of the dinner banquet, Qin Yun came downstairs to join the celebration with everyone. That night Qin Yun's complexion appeared good. When a family portrait was taken, Qin Yun sat with his shoulder leaning into Zhang Yu's shoulder, Commander Zhang and Mrs Zhang senior sat at the front with them. Behind them was Qin Song's little family of three, it was picturesque family portrait.

Qin Song was busy all day entertaining guests and by the time all the guests left it was the middle of the night. He felt larthergic and crawled onto the middle of the bed with Shun Shun. When Ting Ting came out of the bathroom she saw he stuck his finger inside their son's mouth. Shun Shun thought it was feeding time and suckled but his mummy's yummy milk didn't come out. Shun Shun was

disappointed and cried loudly. Qin Song who laid beside his gullible son, was amused and laughed whilst rolling around on the bed.

‘Big brother Song!’ Han Ting Ting called.

Ting Ting stepped to the bed and took out Qin Song’s finger from their son’s mouth. ‘Honey, I washed my hands before. It’s clean.’

‘It doesn’t matter. You can’t stick your fingers in Shun Shun’s mouth,’ Han Ting Ting said and glared at Song Song.

Han Ting Ting picked up Shun Shun and hugged him. Shun Shun could smell his mummy’s yummy milk and leaned his little chubby head against his mummy’s chest. Her heart melted at the sight of Shun Shun’s adorable little gesture. She quickly pulled down her night shirt to breastfeed Shun Shun on the bed.

After Shun Shun was born, he didn’t torture Ting Ting’s body as he did when he was inside her tummy. Qin Song’s mum spent a lot of energy and money to buy the best nutritious ingredients to cook dishes for Ting Ting’s consumption. Ting Ting’s small frame benefit from Qin Song’s mum’s attentive care and her body was healthy and vibrant. That was why since Shun Shun was born, he got to drink his mummy’s yummy milk. Ting Ting was used to breastfeeding Shun Shun but Qin Song’s eyes would always widen and honed in on the beautiful sight of Ting Ting breastfeeding.

Han Ting Ting glanced at Song Song and felt he acted unusual than the other times she breastfed Shun Shun... Song Song suddenly pressed his body against her back and she felt his hot breath at the back of her neck, it made her shiver. Her body tensed and turned around to face Song Song. ‘Hey.’

‘Um,’ Qin Song whispered.

Song Song suckled Han Ting Ting’s ear and she tried to shake him off. ‘We can’t.’

‘The doctor clearly said that after one month we can,’ Qin Song said. He bit Ting Ting’s soft earlobe and breathed heavily. His hands rubbed up and down her body. She leaned back on his chest and breathed weakly.

Shun Shun’s little nose was close to his daddy’s finger. Shun Shun didn’t want to stop drinking his mummy’s yummy milk but it was hard for him to breathe and

he cried loudly to show that he wasn't happy about his late night milk drinking time being interrupted.

Ting Ting heard Shun Shun cried and put more force into stopping Qin Song's seductive movements. Qin Song's eyes were red and teary, he wished he could swallow her whole.

'I feel a little discomfort tonight... can we wait for another two days?' Han Ting Ting bargained.

Ting Ting hugged Shun Shun and looked helplessly at Qin Song. Qin Song's body stiffened and he pulled both Ting Ting and Shun Shun onto his lap. He inhaled her delectable fragrant body for a while and reluctantly loosened his grip. 'I'll wait until you feel more comfortable and I'll ask for interest from you.'

Han Ting Ting sat on Song Song's lap and felt his hot big package pressed against her lower back. She bit her lips for a while before tilting her head to kiss his chin. 'Song Song, I'm sorry.'

Qin Song hugged Ting Ting tight and leaned his chin on her shoulder. Qin Song looked down at their son who was fed and sleeping peacefully against her chest, suddenly Qin Song felt choked from abundant happiness. Qin Song pulled up Ting Ting's night shirt and kissed her deeply. 'Um, I'll go shower.'

Han Ting Ting felt bad for Song Song and pulled him back to the bed. 'Wait.'

'What's wrong? Having second thoughts? We can do it?' Qin Song teased.

Han Ting Ting's face was bright red. 'Song Song, if you feel too uncomfortable, we can.'

Qin Song burst out in laughter. His little wife was too loveable! 'I'm ok, after a shower I'll be good.' He lifted the bed sheet and covered it over Ting Ting and Shun Shun's bodies. He pinched Ting Ting's nose. 'If you're not up to it, I'm not going to force you. I want you to recover fully because you need to be beside me for the rest of my life.'

Han Ting Ting heard Song Song's teasing tone but their faces were close and she saw his sincere heart behind the teasing. He pulled the bed sheet over her and Shun Shun and her eyes became teary. She knew that like her, he was thinking about Qin Yun too.

Qin Song and Han Ting Ting both felt life was too short but love was too deep. Love magnified everything beautiful in life but it also magnified every painful separation in life.

Qin Yun passed away the following Monday after Shun Shun's one month milestone celebration...

Qin Song was ready for work but he carried Shun Shun in his arms and didn't want to be separated from Shun Shun. Han Ting Ting helped him carry his suitcase to the front door. When they opened the front door they were startled to see Zhang Yu standing outside in a daze.

Qin Song got a bad feeling. 'Mum?'

Zhang Yu composed her pale body. 'Where are you going? Don't leave. Go farewell your dad, he's about to pass away.'

Han Ting Ting's whole body was shaking and dropped Song Song's suit case. 'Mum...'

Qin Song felt lost for two seconds before he turned around and gently put Shun Shun in Ting Ting's arms. Then he draped an arm around Zhang Yu's shoulder. 'Ok, we'll go see dad.'

Qin Song's family entered his parents' bedroom. Qin Song saw his parents' room was taken up by a cloud of white lab coats. The doctors that wore the white lab coats, all looked sombre. They heard footsteps and turned around to look at him. He nodded his head. 'You can all leave.'

The doctors left the room. Zhang Yu, Qin Song, Han Ting Ting and Shun Shun stayed behind in the room that was filled with a heavy atmosphere. Zhang Yu played with Qin Yun's hand. Qin Yun creased his forehead and tried to fight his drowsiness, he slowly opened his eyes for the final time. Qin Yun saw Zhang Yu and struggled to force his mouth to smile.

Qin Yun smiled weakly but everyone saw the gentleness behind his weak smile. Inside their trembling hearts they saw Qin Yun the infamous prideful man.

'Don't you want to say anything to me? Like declaring your love for me? It's

your last chance,' Zhang Yu said.

The moment Zhang Yu stepped into the room she hid her broken heart. The Zhang Yu who stood in front of Qin Yun smiled brightly like the carefree Zhang Yu who Qin Yun met for the first time decades ago... the love Qin Yun and Zhang Yu shared was the best thing that happened in Qin Yun's life.

Qin Yun gently patted Zhang Yu's hand and she sat on the bed beside him.

'Qin Song!' Qin Yun called. He stretched out his hand to Qin Song. Qin Song gripped his hand and helped him sit up against the head bed. 'I'm sorry. I've never praised you once.' He paused to gather all his strength. 'It wasn't because you're not smart or didn't excel enough nor was it because I didn't think you're strong. It was because I worried too much about your future. You were a child that was too fortunate. The moment you were born there was a circle of people ready to protect you, love you and dote on you. Your life path laid in front of you was too smooth. It was though you'll never get to taste failure. I was really worried. I was worried what would happen if you were ever faced with struggles and how much you'll be able to cope... I'm sorry, it's only now that I realised I was wrong. I can now see that you don't just own luck. I should have known a lot sooner that because you're my son that you won't let obstacles get in your way and you have the same blessings in life as I do... I feel that you're my blessing... Song Song, having a son like you, I have no regret left in this lifetime.'

Qin Song leaned forward and used an arm to support his dad. He forced himself to smile. 'Dad, I know. Is there anything else you want to say to me?'

'Um, I do have one thing that won't let my heart be at peace... my woman, in the future I have to burden you to take care of my woman,' Qin Yun said. He gently patted his son's shoulder and handed over the duty of protecting Zhang Yu to his son.

Qin Song nodded his head. 'Dad, be at peace. I promise that for the rest of my life I'll make sure that mum gets to continue to be unreasonable, lively, stubborn, get to have her way and don't have to follow protocols like how her life is when you were by her side.'

After Qin Yun exchanged a duty for an oath with Qin Song, the two generations of the Qin household held onto each other's shoulder like two close

brothers. There was no longer the fear of a painful separation between them, they treated death like it was a long deep sleep. Ten years, twenty years, one hundred years later... because they shared a close bond they would meet again.

Qin Song stepped back and brought his wife and son to stand in front of his dad.

Han Ting Ting wasn't able to put on a light attitude like Zhang Yu and Song Song. Han Ting Ting carried Shun Shun who was sleeping peacefully in her arms and sat down on Qin Yun's bed. She couldn't hold back the tears deep in her heart from falling down her cheeks.

'Little girl, don't cry. What's there to cry about?' Qin Yun said. He rubbed Ting Ting's head. In his heart he saw Ting Ting as his own daughter. 'Ting Bao, I have two things left I want to say to you. Marrying into my family isn't a fair bargain for you. In the future my Song Song has to rely on you.'

Han Ting Ting wasn't able to say a word, her tears kept falling and she could only nod her head.

'Our little Qin Shun Shun... if Shun Shun gives you grievances, give them all to his dad to deal with it,' Qin Yun advised. He played with Shun Shun's little soft hand. His hand lingered on Shun Shun's hand for a long time, he didn't want to be separated from Shun Shun. He forced himself to retrieve his hand and lifted his head to look at his son. 'Ok, you can take your wife and son outside.'

Qin Song's eyes lingered on his dad one last time... a long time later he held his wife and son into his chest and they quietly left his parents' room.

Qin Song closed his parents' bedroom door. Qin Song's family stood in a daze waiting outside his parents' bedroom. They heard soft and loud mumbles from his parents' room. They didn't need to hear the exact words but knew that the mumbles were the deep love that was shared for decades and wouldn't change in the future between Qin Yun and Zhang Yu.

The mumbles suddenly ceased... a long time later Qin Song's family heard Zhang Yu cried out, it wasn't a sob but Zhang Yu's one cry contained all imaginable pain. Qin Song's face paled, Han Ting Ting covered her mouth to stop the sounds of her crying from coming out and little Shun Shun who was too young to understand what happened to Qin Yun but Shun Shun woke up and

loud ‘waaa waaa’ sounds from Shun Shun’s little heart echoed throughout the house.

Qin Song never wanted to own any head position but after his dad’s passing the head of the Qin household position was put on his shoulders. Qin Song knew he needed to maintain the Qin household’s dignity and couldn’t avoid being civil to opportunistic critters that came to his dad’s funeral in hopes of forming a better connection with the Qin household. His dad’s coffin was behind him and on his shoulders were heavy burdens, he realised he’d never be able to return back to be the Qin Song that was reckless, stubborn and selfish in the past.

Qin Song felt that his new maturity made the people around him happy and at ease but for him it felt too heavy.

Qin Song was responsible for greeting guests outside the hall. Zhang Yu stayed inside the hall and performed the funeral rituals required as the wife of Qin Yun who was the former head of the Qin household. Zhang Yu went through the motions as guest after guest arrived to pay their respects. Amongst the guests were many curious wives of Qin Yun’s business acquaintances. They came especially to see how the Zhang household’s ‘drunken sheltered daughter’ Zhang Yu would disgrace herself at Qin Yun’s funeral. Usually the Zhang Yu they were accustomed to was doted on and under the protection of Qin Yun so Zhang Yu was always carefree and shunned protocols. They thought they’d see Zhang Yu sobbing hysterically that day but unexpectedly Zhang Yu was composed and calmly followed all the funeral rituals required to a satisfactory standard.

Zhang Yu maintained an indifference expression. She looked beautiful in a black dress and her posture was regal. Not a single cry came out of her pursed lips and not a single drop of tear came out of her eyes.

No one knew the real reason why Zhang Yu didn’t cry. Zhang Yu didn’t cry because she was putting up a brave front or that she was strong. It was because the man that wiped her tears her whole life was laying silently inside the coffin in front of her. Without him, no one in the world should even dream they could console her.

Zhang Yu’s soul whispered to Qin Yun’s soul – ‘Qin Yun, take a look, apart from

you, there's no one left who understands me.'

Han Ting Ting stood beside Zhang Yu most of the day. She saw her mum-in-law stood straight, head held high and eyes blood red. It made her heart broken and speechless, she didn't know how to console Zhang Yu. Like Zhang Yu, she also married into the Qin household and she understood a little of Zhang Yu's sense of pride to be married to someone who was head of the Qin household.

Every two hour interval Han Ting Ting left the hall to breastfeed Shun Shun. She'd pass the living room and saw Song Song spoke civilly to the guests that arrived. The guests looked solemn but Song Song looked calm. But later when she passed the living room she saw Song Song's sworn brothers arrived. His sworn brothers silently embraced Song Song one by one and Song Song let go of his composure to reveal his true deep grief.

Han Ting Ting from the distance was able to see how Song Song hunched over and his head lowered. His defeated posture pierced sharp glasses into her heart, it was unspeakable pain.

It was spring and night winds weren't cold. The night sky was clear and the moon shone down on the house that Qin Yun lived in his life. The shadows of grieving guests leaving didn't match a fresh spring night. The night breezes passed through and fluttered the white fabrics that were hung on tree branches.

It was passed three in the morning. Han Ting Ting waited for Song Song to return to their room and couldn't sleep. She decided to put on her clothes and went downstairs to heat up a glass of milk for him.

Han Ting Ting passed the hall and there were still many good friends that stayed awake next to the coffin. She greeted them with a polite smile and went to look for Song Song. She found him by the fish pond.

Song Song stood at the spot where his whole family were fishing last summer, he stood in a daze facing the fish pond and quietly smoking.

Qin Song heard swish-swoosh footsteps on the grass and became alert. He turned around and saw it was Ting Ting. He was about to throw away the cigarette in his hand but she stopped him.

'Song Song, continue smoking. Once in a while smoking a couple of cigarettes

to get rid of stress is ok,' Han Ting Ting said.

Qin Song smiled at Ting Ting and his hand still threw away the cigarette. He pulled the collar of her jacket up. 'Honey, why are you out here? Is Shun Shun sleeping in our room by himself?'

'No. My parents are here, Shun Shun's sleeping with them tonight,' Han Ting Ting said. She held Song Song's hand and was relieved it wasn't frozen. 'I was scared you were cold. Are you sleepy? There're still a few hours before morning, why don't you rest your eyes a little?'

Qin Song shook his head. 'I'm not sleepy.' He buttoned Ting Ting's collar buttons. 'Honey, go back inside. You only gave birth a month ago and need to be more careful. I've been too busy the last two days and haven't been taking good care of you and Shun Shun, I'm sorry. You need to take care of yourself well, you're not allowed to fall ill.'

'I know. You don't have to worry about Shun Shun and me,' Han Ting Ting said. She gave Song Song the glass of milk. 'Drink it. I want to stay with you for a bit then I'll go back inside.'

Qin Song's hands were warmed holding the glass of milk. He gave Ting Ting a sip of milk first then he gulped down the milk. He felt better after drinking the milk with Ting Ting beside him.

Qin Song put the empty glass on the nearby stone table. He hugged Ting Ting and sighed.

'Do you feel better?' Han Ting Ting asked.

'Um,' Qin Song said.

It was silent from all four directions. Ting Ting didn't know what to say to Qin Song and gently patted his arm like how she'd pat Shun Shun to get Shun Shun to sleep. Qin Song felt comforted and rested his chin on her head.

'Song Song, if you feel uncomfortable anywhere, you can tell me,' Han Ting Ting said softly.

'I'm ok,' Qin Song said. He closed his eyes. 'Honey, you don't have to worry. I still need to look after you, Shun Shun and others. I won't collapse.'

‘I’m not worried you’ll collapse. I know you’re more capable and stronger than others... but I’m scared you’re tired and that you’re bottling up your grief. Song Song, I’m not an outsider. In front of me you don’t have to act tough, I won’t laugh at you,’ Han Ting Ting said.

Han Ting Ting felt that she was Song Song’s wife and someone he could share his sadness, happiness or anger.

Qin Song let go of his stiff smile and showed how depressed he felt. He didn’t want to show that side of him to anyone but he felt safe to be himself in front of Ting Ting.

Qin Song was a pillar of the Qin household that others relied on. It didn’t matter who came to pay their respects to his dad, whether they were sincere or acting, during the day he didn’t dare to think about one thing – on the inside he was just a child that lost his dad.

Qin Song’s heart cried out to Ting Ting – ‘I don’t have a dad anymore. I’m really hurting.’

A layer of pain Qin Song suppressed was pulled to the surface of his heart by Ting Ting. The other layers of pain would gradually dissolve over time. ‘My dad is really gone... I never imagined it was possible for someone as strong as my dad to die... since I was a kid to now, my dad to me was... he was for everyone the most reliable and tenacious man as if there was nothing that he couldn’t do.’

‘I know he was... I know,’ Han Ting Ting said softly.

‘My dad gave me many blessings, he brought you into my life and because you’re with me we conceived Shun Shun... my dad brought everything that’s good into my life,’ Qin Song said.

Qin Song regretted the foolish years he spent being arrogant enough that it was laughable, misunderstanding his dad didn’t love him and wasting years meaninglessly. His dad in his final stage in life, used the strength his dad had left to comfort him and from the bottom of his heart he truly regretted his foolish behaviour in the past.

‘Hey,’ Han Ting Ting said. She pulled back from Song Song’s tight grip to look up at him. She stood on her tiptoes and hugged his waist. ‘Let me hug you. If you

want to be sad be sad, if you want to cry it's ok, right here it's just the two of us.'

Qin Song was hugged tight by Ting Ting. He was taller than her by a head, he hunched to let her hug him, it wasn't a comfortable position but mysteriously all the tensions in his body went away in that uncomfortable position. She hugged him until she couldn't stand straight anymore and fell into his chest then he straightened and squeezed her waist. He lifted her off the ground and she leaned on his waist.

'Ting Bao...' Qin Song said in a shaky voice. He let Ting Ting stand on his toes. He didn't say anything else except calling her name for a long time.

That night, Qin Song and Han Ting Ting hugged each other in front of the fish pond until morning.

Past six in the morning the sky brightened and the dark clouds parted. Above Qin Song and Han Ting Ting the sky cleared and was wide and the light shredded the previous bleak night. The light was warm and made it a fresh day.

Qin Song carried his wife to the stone bench and he rocked her to sleep. He used his jacket to cover her body and rested his chin on her head to watch the sunrise. The sunlight shone on her beautiful sleeping figure and it dissolved another layer of pain in his heart.

It was a new day, the day Qin Song matured, the official day he carried all the responsibilities of someone who was a protector and resilient.

Qin Song looked into the distance at his and Ting Ting's new home. He made a vow to himself that he'd protect everyone that he loved in their home, his vulnerable mum and his little son who was sleeping peacefully in a crib. He looked down at his sleeping lifetime partner, he didn't care if they were rich, poor, lived a life of luxury or struggled to make ends meet he'd have Ting Ting by his side and together they'd endure what was ahead of them and they weren't going to separate from each other.

Qin Song's dad entrusted him with the duty to protect his family and he wasn't going to let his dad down. In the future he was going to pass down the same duty to his son the same way his dad trusted he'd carry out his duty for the rest of his life.

In the past Qin Song thought that it was inevitable that he'd settle down and take on his dad's responsibilities. But under the spring light, he finally understood that the heavens planned for him to meet Ting Ting and to bring Shun Shun into the world before he was born.

End of Chapter Fifteen (Part 3 of 3)

Related

Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Sixteen

Three years later, end of summer.

Qin Song's afternoon meeting went smoothly and ended early. He was in a good mood and went to pick up his wife. He drove Ting Ting to her parents' house for dinner and also to pick up their son.

Ting's dad earned another promotion and his workload was busier by the day. Ting's parents moved houses, it had two bedrooms and a living room. Their new house wasn't big but it was clean and had good ventilation. Under a giant tree in the courtyard in front of their house were gentle elderly ladies who sat on benches. Qin Song and Ting Ting's little Shun Shun was the focus of everyone's attention. Shun Shun's stuck his bottom up in the air and excitedly performed folk dances, whilst the elderly ladies around Shun Shun used their fans to keep Shun Shun cool under the hot summer sun.

Qin Song rushed to pick up his precious son. He wiped the sweat off Shun Shun's face and tossed Shun Shun in the air, which made Shun Shun laugh happily.

Han Ting Ting picked up Shun Shun from Song Song's arms and put Shun Shun back on the ground. She thought the father and son pair were like each other, their middle names were both 'play.' 'Shun Shun, where's grandma and grandmother?'

'They're inside their living room undergoing special training,' an elderly lady with two front teeth missing said. 'Song Song's mum lost again today.'

Before Qin Song's family stepped inside the special training living room they heard a song being butchered. Qin Song and Ting Ting quietly exchanged a glance and decided they'd be brave and open the door. Inside the room, Ting's mum and Zhang Yu both wore a red fabric around their waist and teaching each other to dance. The moment Shun Shun stepped into the living room he covered his ears and shouted a protest.

Ting's mum saw Shun Shun's parents were back from work and turned off the music, whilst Zhang Yu kept dancing to her own beats.

Ting's mum passed Qin Song a bowl of refreshing mung beans. Qin Song scooped a spoonful of mung beans into his mouth. 'Mum, I heard you lost again today.'

Zhang Yu was dejected after being reminded of her disgraceful loss, she plopped herself on the sofa and stared at the floor. When she was Shun Shun's age she started learning ballet and was known as the 'artistic tree' in school. In her life apart from her specialty in spending money she was good at dancing. So she didn't know why she was beaten by a group of amateurs.

Han Ting Ting passed a bowl of mung beans to Zhang Yu. 'Mum do you need to beat them? The aunties from the opposing team have been dancing for five to six years and performed in public arenas too. Mum you just started learning the dance routine, each new dance takes time to get the hang of it.'

'Of course I need to beat them!' Zhang Yu said. She gulped down half the bowl of mung beans and burped. 'After I master their best dance routine, I'm going to create a new dance routine that will defeat them.'

Ting Ting was speechless. Qin Song pulled her to the side. 'Honey, can I give the neighbourhood aunties a secret funding to forfeit the dance competition? At this rate there'll be no one to look after our son. Your mum's time is about to be monopolised by my mum.'

Han Ting Ting picked up her mum's dance costume from the sofa and looked at the tag. Zhang Yu ordered customised dance costumes for the neighbourhood aunties from overseas and expressed delivered them to her mum's house. Han Ting Ting felt that her mum, Zhang Yu and aunties used dance as a joyful way to pass the time in their advanced age. Song Song's secret funding wasn't going to be enough to bribe them to stop competing.

'Song Song, don't interfere. I'm happy as long as mum is happy. Shun Shun will be ok. Besides, mum isn't going to be dancing all day,' Han Ting Ting said.

On the weekend, Qin Song and Han Ting Ting's mums were practicing in the

courtyard in front of Ting's parents' house. Their mums and the neighbourhood aunties practiced a beautiful dance routine with enthusiasm. Ting's mum was the principal dancer and Zhang Yu was the second lead dancer and they were both upbeat. Shun Shun was taken back to his parents' home.

In the afternoon, Qin Sang invited Ting Ting for an outing. Qin Song stayed at home to play with Shun Shun. Apart from sleeping, the remaining time Shun Shun loved to play with his daddy more than with his mummy, whatever his daddy did he wanted to copy too.

Qin Song looked into his son's naive eyes and suddenly felt the urge to tease the kiddo. Qin Song placed his hands on his cheeks, Shun Shun copied him. Afterward Qin Song rubbed his cheeks and Shun Shun laughed happily whilst copying him. Then Qin Song pretended to hit his cheeks hard... Poor Qin Shun Shun was too young to think about consequences on his own, his chubby hands hit his little chubby white cheeks hard. Shun Shun was shocked by the pain for a moment then immediately opened his little mouth to cry 'waaa waaa waaa' pitifully.

Qin Song rolled around the floor laughing loudly almost to the point of choking on his laughter. When Qin Song felt he laughed enough he noticed his son didn't stop crying and was forced to coax his son. 'If you stop crying, daddy will buy you ice-cream.'

The crying ceased. Qin Shun Shun widened his dark round eyes. 'Promise?'

Qin Song nodded his head as a promise.

The Qin household's little Shun Shun was infamous for his little chubby body and big appetite. Shun Shun smiled brightly at the sound of ice-cream even though his eyes were teary.

The kitchen was meticulously kept tidy and clean by Ting Ting. The father and son pair sat opposite to each other on the floor next to the window. They put a tub of chocolate ice-cream in the middle and each person held a spoon to scoop the chocolate ice-cream. The sunlight through the window reflected off the white kitchen cabinet shelves and shone a warm orange light over the father and son who were eating happily together.

Qin Shun Shun licked his ice-cream spoon and smiled brightly. 'Daddy, mummy

said... little children that eat ice-cream will get a stomach ache.'

'Um, mummy's right,' Qin Song said. He wiped the corner of his son's lips that was smeared with chocolate ice-cream. 'But if you eat a little bit it's ok.'

Qin Shun Shun tilted his little chubby head to the side to remember what else his mummy said about ice-cream. 'Mummy said, if little children eat a little bit... will rot teeth.'

'Oh? Then you shouldn't eat ice-cream,' Qin Song said. He pinched his son's little nose and hid the empty tub of chocolate ice-cream at the bottom of the rubbish bin. 'Ok, we're done eating. Later you can't tell mummy. If you tell mummy she'll hit your bottom and I won't stop her.'

Qin Shun Shun licked his ice-cream spoon and nodded his little chubby head.

Unfortunately Han Ting Ting emptied the rubbish bin and discovered the father and son's secret binge eating session. She washed her hands in the kitchen and nagged Song Song. 'Why must you do that? When I punish our son not to eat junk food, you secretly take our son to the supermarkets to buy junk food and eat in the car. I said each week our son can only eat one scoop of ice-cream. You're a heroic daddy, in one afternoon you let our son eat a large tub of ice-cream.'

'Shun Shun didn't eat it all, I ate it with him,' Qin Song protested.

'What? You want me to praise you?' Han Ting Ting said. She wanted to laugh and cry at the same time. 'Usually the disciplinary role in a family belongs to the daddy. Why is it that in our family, I'm the one that has to discipline our son? While you get to pretend to be the good one taking our son's side.'

'That's because Miss Han is an excellent teacher. You're suitable to be the strict one,' Qin Song said. 'Between us there needs to be someone who should play the good cop. I know my wise, beautiful, kind and generous wife loves me and that's why she gave me the good cop role.'

'Stay away!' Han Ting Ting scolded lovingly.

In the past Han Ting Ting used to blame her dad for being too strict and not as easy going as Tu Tu's dad. After raising Shun Shun, she understood her dad's perspective – her mum got to play good cop.

Song Song was like a sticky lollipop, once he was stuck to Han Ting Ting it was hard for her to get him off her. He carried her to their bedroom and she hit him gently. ‘Let me down. You’re hateful.’

Qin Song dismissed Ting Ting’s weak plea and rubbed her plump round bottom. ‘Mrs Qin junior you had a hard time disciplining our son. Let me your loving husband help you feel less burdened.’

Shun Shun’s bedroom door suddenly opened. He wore his cartoon pyjamas and there were yellow stains on his pants. He wiped the tears off his dark round eyes. ‘Daddy... mummy... I have a stomach ache... I pooped in my pants...’

Han Ting Ting burst into laughter. She jumped off Song Song’s arms. She pushed Song Song forward to their son. ‘What good timing. You got a good opportunity to help me feel less burdened. Hurry up and go to the bathroom with Shun Shun.’

End of Chapter Sixteen

Related

Side Story One

Side Story One – First Meeting

The woman Qin Yun was supposed to marry was Zhang Pu.

When Qin Yun came back to take over his dad's company from studying overseas in the US, he realised his dad's company was smoke and mirrors. From the outside Qin's company was a strong competitor on the market, but from the inside it was going to be a lot of work! Not long after he started changing management style at Qin's company, his dad's obnoxious elderly peers demanded one thing from him – marriage.

The Zhang household was an influential powerhouse in his district. Commander Zhang's oldest daughter Zhang Pu was a triple threat to women, she had looks, brains and common sense.

Qin Yun and Zhang Pu got to know each other for two months. They were both cold as ice to each other. Their chemistry was thinner than smoke, but they continued to go along with their parents plan to have them hitched.

Qin Yun met his future in-laws before Zhang Pu met his parents. Zhang Pu's parents were smitten with his ideal son-in-law act during the luncheon at their house and detained him for dinner.

After the lunch, Zhang Pu had a nap and couldn't care less how Qin Yun entertained himself. Qin Yun was indifferent too and wandered around Commander Zhang's study room to check out the vintage book collections. Through the half opened study room door he heard a door creaked from the room next door and went to close the study room door to not be interrupted but... his eyes unintentionally swept over the room next door and it was the first time he laid eyes on the ice queen Zhang Pu's younger sister Zhang Yu.

The first time Qin Yun met Zhang Yu, she wore a school uniform, her long hair was down and she gave off a fresh, sweet and warm vibe. He didn't know where she got her hands on a packet of cigarettes but he thought she must have been curious and secretly hid in an empty room to probe the packet of cigarettes. She didn't know how to use a lighter. She fiddled with the lighter for a while and sunk

to the floor. She didn't notice the cigarette packet fell onto the floor instead she kept fiddling with the lighter.

Zhang Yu was frustrated she didn't know how to use the lighter. Suddenly a hand with longer fingers from behind her took a cigarette out from the cigarette packet and lit the lighter. She didn't take notice of how the lighter worked because her hand trembled when the stranger's hand grazed over her hand. By the time she calmed herself down there was a beautiful light blue flame in front of her and the cigarette was lit. She turned around and was face to face with a young man who smiled charmingly at her.

'Wow!' Zhang Yu cried out. She clasped her hands and begged. 'Teach me how you turned on the lighter.'

Young Zhang Yu was beautiful like a rose bud opening. Her innocent eyes pierced through Qin Yun's heart. He didn't hold back his urge and gently stroke her smooth long hair. 'Ok, I'll teach you.'

It was expected that members of the Qin household didn't approve of Zhang Yu who was a sheltered youngster and didn't match their criteria to be the wife of the head of the Qin household. The way Qin Yun attentively doted on Zhang Yu was also an eyesore to them.

Neither did the senior members of the Zhang household agreed to let Qin Yun marry Zhang Yu.

Commander Zhang fought wars half his lifetime, usually he wasn't interested in controlling others' love lives and preferred to let others' love lives progress naturally. But Qin Yun wanting to marry Commander Zhang's baby daughter instead of his oldest daughter gave him a headache. Commander Zhang's wife Mrs Zhang senior lectured Qin Yun on his error of judgement. Mrs Zhang senior explained that Zhang Pu was more compatible to be Qin Yun's wife because Zhang Pu was worldlier and was able to support and give sound advice relating to Qin Yun's career. Secondly, Mrs Zhang senior argued that Zhang Yu was too young and what sane parents would marry their baby daughter off before their older daughter who was ripe for marriage?

Commander Zhang loved his youngest daughter Zhang Yu the most and the Zhang household treasured Zhang Yu as a precious pearl in their palm, they

weren't ready to part with their darling Zhang Yu that early.

'I'm willing to wait for Zhang Yu,' Qin Yun said gently. 'I'll wait for another two years for Zhang Yu to graduate and I'll marry her.'

Mrs Zhang senior sighed. 'If Zhang Pu is a nine on a scale of an ideal wife for you then Zhang Yu is a six. A married couple need to be able to lean on one another for the rest of their lives. Qin Yun, you need to think it over carefully before you make your final decision.'

'Aunty, I promise you that I will love Zhang Yu more than anyone else can,' Qin Yun promised.

Mrs Zhang senior was out of reasons to dissuade Qin Yun from making what she believed as a fatal mistake. Mrs Zhang senior resorted to calling Zhang Pu to have a private talk with Qin Yun and to knock some sense into Qin Yun.

Qin Yun wasn't surprised to see Zhang Pu was sent to make him change his mind about marrying Zhang Yu. He nodded his head as a polite greeting to the ice queen Zhang Pu.

Zhang Pu was her usual standoffish self. 'What do you like about Zhang Yu? Is it her low IQ?'

'Zhang Pu!' Qin Yun warned Zhang Pu not to test his patience.

Zhang Pu laughed coldly. 'Big brother Qin Yun, you make me feel like I'm nothing but a joke.'

'I didn't mean to hurt your pride, I'm sorry,' Qin Yun said.

'No need to say sorry,' Zhang Pu said in a colder tone. 'You can accept to marry a barbie doll to satisfy your own fetish. I should be thankful that you opened my eyes to see clearly how your judgement is different to a reasonable person.'

Qin Yun kept quiet and only gave Zhang Pu a charming smile to combat her childish attacks on his lack of judgement that was reasonable to him. Zhang Pu's reactions validated his judgement.

Zhang Pu resented her former fiancée Qin Yun choosing Zhang Yu over her more than she resented their broken engagement. Zhang Pu couldn't stand being in

the same room as her former fiance soon to be younger brother-in-law. Zhang Pu bolted out of the room and collided with Zhang Yu who was eating a pomegranate.

‘Ah!’ Zhang Yu cried out. She stumbled back a few steps. She saw it was her know-it-all older sister and wasn’t pleased. ‘Zhang Pu what are you doing? You did that on purpose!’

Zhang Pu intimidated Zhang Yu with an intense cold dagger. Zhang Yu knew she was no match for Zhang Pu’s ice queen demeanour and could only mumble curses. Zhang Yu picked up her half bitten pomegranate that rolled onto the carpet floor during the collision with the ice queen. Zhang Yu wiped off dust and continued eating the rest of her pomegranate.

‘Having someone see you as a pet to raise for the rest of your life, does that make you happy?’ Zhang Pu asked spitefully.

Zhang Yu stared at the ice queen in confusion. ‘What?’

‘I-asked-you about having someone like Qin Yun wanting to take you home as his wife to spend your life in the Qin household cage. What makes you so sure of yourself that you have the right to be married to someone of his status? Are you relying on your loveable nature? Or is it your high aptitude for being a first class troublemaker? Or is it your lack of reasoning skills that allows you to live in ignorant bliss and pretend nothing is wrong even if the sky is falling?’ Zhang Pu asked.

‘Hey!’ Zhang Yu said. She threw her pomegranate on the carpet floor, rolled up her sleeves and pointed a slender white finger at the ice queen. ‘Are you asking for a fight with me?’

Zhang Pu closed her mouth. She still had many sharp insults left she wanted to aim at Zhang Yu but she preferred to fight with words than swords and wisely stayed speechless.

Zhang Pu felt only fists rivalled her wits, it was a tragic reality.

Zhang Pu sighed. She understood Zhang Yu’s true nature long ago. Her younger sister wasn’t someone who would put up a gentle front and wasn’t capable of being a schemer. It was hard to win against a pure simpleton with

strong fists.

Zhang Pu wanted to forget about demeaning a dummy like Zhang Yu. There was no point taking shots at Zhang Yu at the expense of further lowering her self-worth.

One minute ago the ice queen's mouth was viciously insulting Zhang Yu and the next moment the ice queen turned around and walked off. Zhang Pu that weirdo! Zhang Yu stared at the ice queen's regal posture and felt that her older sister was definitely a weirdo. She kicked her pomegranate into the distance to vent her frustration.

The pomegranate accidentally hit Zhang Pu's back and Zhang Pu cried out in pain. Zhang Pu turned around to glare ferociously at Zhang Yu. Zhang Yu realised she kicked too high and far and quickly ran off to retreat from the ice queen's temper.

Whilst Zhang Yu was running away scared for her life, Qin Yun pulled Zhang Yu's shivering arm into a room.

'Oh, you were in here the whole time?' Zhang Yu asked. She breathed out a sigh of relief because she wasn't captured by the ice queen. 'Were you talking with my sister before in here?'

Qin Yun nodded his head. He gently swept the strands of hair away from Zhang Yu's face.

Zhang Yu wasn't happy with Qin Yun. 'Why didn't you come out to save me from my sister?'

'Wasn't it you I saw threatening your sister with a one on one fist fight that made her run away frantically? You even used a weapon to attempt to kill her,' Qin Yun teased.

The thought of Zhang Pu the almighty ice goddess crying out like an ordinary human when the pomegranate hit her straight back made Qin Yun laugh. Qin Yun pulled Zhang Yu closer to him, he wanted to kiss Zhang Yu but he was worried it'd scare Zhang Yu. He could only hold her close to him for them to feel each other's breath.

Zhang Yu was cheered up by the mention of the ice queen's angry face when

the pomegranate accidentally wiped away the ice queen's usual cold look. She laughed like a fool.

Since Qin Yun was a kid he was a clean freak. But when Zhang Yu's saliva flung onto his face from laughing, he forgot about his clean freak nature instead felt Zhang Yu's spit was endearing because it brought them a step closer, he didn't have any intention of wiping her spit off his face.

When Qin Yun had to leave, he wanted Zhang Yu to escort him to the door. But the tragic reality or from Qin Yun's point of view another way of bringing him and Zhang Yu a step closer, he was the one that piggybacked Zhang Yu to the front door.

Zhang Yu was happy on Qin Yun's back. 'My mum said that you wanted to marry me.'

'Um,' Qin Yun said and turned around to smile at Zhang Yu.

'You're not going to marry my sister? Aren't you her boyfriend?' Zhang Yu asked.

'No, I'm not marrying your sister,' Qin Yun said.

'Why?' Zhang Yu asked.

'Because I want to marry you,' Qin Yun said.

Zhang Yu didn't understand what went wrong. She and Qin Yun ended up circling back to her original question. He wasn't supposed to say he wanted to marry her when she asked him if it was true he wanted to marry her. When they reached the front door he let her climb down his back but she was still in a daze figuring out how to get him to answer why he wanted to marry her.

'I'm leaving. Be good. Don't cause any big trouble to delay our wedding day,' Qin Yun advised.

'I know!' Zhang Yu said. She smiled sweetly and held onto Qin Yun's shirt sleeve. 'If Zhang Pu asks me what right I have to marry you then what should I say? Is it true you want to take me home as a pet to raise?'

Zhang Yu's little dream was for Qin Yun to give her an atomic comeback to knock the ice queen off the ice queen's frozen pedestal. If Zhang Yu used fists to

fight with Zhang Pu, it was Zhang Yu who was victorious. But Zhang Yu was always defeated by Zhang Pu when it came to war of words.

‘What do you think?’ Qin Yun teased.

‘Being seen as a loveable pet... it’s not that bad,’ Zhang Yu said. She paused and thought of a way to get Qin Yun to answer her main question. ‘But, what’s the real reason you want to marry me?’

Qin Yun gazed at Zhang Yu’s innocent eyes and gave into his urge to pinch her adorable nose. ‘It’s because... I want to take you home as my pet to dote on you. I’ve never loved a pet as much as I love you before, I want to take care of you for the rest of my life, are you willing?’

Zhang Yu rubbed her embarrassed nose and nodded her head in agreement.

Qin Yun’s mood was good, he stood at the door to stare at Zhang Yu’s embarrassed back as she ran back to her room. He didn’t go to his car until he couldn’t see Zhang Yu from the distance.

Qin Yun sat in his car. There was an item he carried in his pocket. He smiled and stroked the item like it was Zhang Yu’s smooth hair.

The item was the cigarette packet. That day Qin Yun and Zhang Yu met for the first time, Zhang Yu was distracted by his charms that she didn’t know he’d taken the cigarette packet. Written on the cigarette packet was – ‘the first meeting is like meeting a fated savior.’

A warm afternoon.

Zhang Yu sensed that Qin Yun was startled awake. She knew he was in great pain but pretended to be asleep because he was always scared to make her worry about him.

A doctor came to adjust the monitoring equipment and left quickly. Last night Zhang Yu found out Qin Song invited another five specialists from overseas to perform another surgery the following week.

Zhang Yu chased after the doctor. ‘No more surgeries!’ She looked out the window at the foggy afternoon sky. ‘Can you prescribe for him more effective

painkillers? I don't want him to feel pain anymore. He's in so much pain that it's a struggle for him to blink.'

'At this point in time I can't prescribe him any additional painkillers or it'll affect the effectiveness of his upcoming surgery,' the doctor explained.

'I told you already, no more surgeries!' Zhang Yu said.

'Mrs Qin senior... if I don't keep the surgery schedule date as planned then Mr Qin junior won't let the rest of us live in peace,' the doctor said.

The doctor was contracted by Qin Song and needed to perform the duties as agreed in their contract.

'Get rid of all the doctors related to my husband's surgery. Keep the doctors that are responsible for daily monitoring of my husband's body condition. Your conscience knows even if another surgery is performed what the end result will be. Listen to me and I'll guarantee all your careers will stay intact. But if you ignore my request and Qin Song is angry at the results of next week's surgery then I won't step in to help any of you,' Zhang Yu said.

The doctor heard the seriousness of Zhang Yu's threat and didn't dispute her reasoning. The doctor nodded and left to discuss Zhang Yu's request with Qin Yun's other doctors.

Later that afternoon no one dared to extract blood and urine samples from Qin Yun for the purpose of planning another surgery. But no one came to give Qin Yun new painkillers, it was likely the doctors didn't get permission from Qin Song yet and didn't dare to give Qin Yun stronger painkillers.

Zhang Yu thought her son gave off a more mature aura. In the past many people were scared of little Qin Song's temper, but since he married Ting Ting and took over Qin's company people revered him more than they were scared of him and referred to him as Mr Qin junior instead of little Qin Song.

Zhang Yu looked at her husband faking sleep in his hospital bed. She thought he must be happy and proud of their son's maturity. A few days ago when Qin Yun heard Qin Song was able to control the majority of Qin's company shares, Qin Yun said to her that it was true a brilliant man would have a brilliant son. Qin Yun also praised that Qin Song was more strategic than Qin Yun when he was

younger.

As if! Zhang Yu remembered that day she rubbed Qin Yun's sunken cheeks and said that there was no one that outshone him when he was Qin Song's age.

Someone knocked on the door and Zhang Yu turned around. It was one of the Qin household assistants. 'Mr Qin junior arrived and is heading to the hospital meeting room.'

'Ok, I'll make my way there now,' Zhang Yu said.

The assistant left but Zhang Yu didn't rush to the hospital meeting room. She squeezed Qin Yun's nose and made him open his eyes before she released his nose. 'I was sleeping.'

'I know,' Zhang Yu said. She laughed at Qin Yun's bad white lie. She stood and gave him the same bright smile as when she was younger. 'I'm going outside for a bit and will come back straight away.'

Qin Yun nodded his head and squeezed Zhang Yu's hand. There was a rare hesitation look in his eyes. 'Little Yu...'

Zhang Yu kissed Qin Yun to stop him from saying what she knew he wanted to say. She waited for him to accept that she wasn't ready for him to say those words out loud and stood again. She smiled too brightly. 'Wait for me.'

Qin Yun forced a smile and nodded his head.

Zhang Yu walked stiffly to go find her son. She needed to convince him and beg him to let her husband, his father... to die.

Everyone knew the end result was set but no one wanted to be the one to pull the plug. It was up to Zhang Yu to be the one to pull the plug. Her whole life she only needed to do it once.

Qin Yun secretly watched his wife's stiff movements, her back straight and her head held high.

Outside Qin Yun's hospital room, Zhang Yu was battling her worst fear. Qin Yun spent most of his life loving, doting and protecting her. She wasn't able to repay him for everything he did for her in their lifetime together. The least she could do was escort him to the end of his life, she'd stay by his side until he closed his eyes

for the final time and afterward she was prepared to face a deadly sense of loneliness.

Outsiders always pointed their fingers at Zhang Yu and accused her of owning the best luck. Zhang Yu's soul whispered to Qin Yun's soul – 'Qin Yun, take a look, there's no one that understands me.'

Zhang Yu walked each step without regret.

Zhang Yu remembered the first day she met Qin Yun. Some of her school peers sneaked cigarette packets to school. She sneaked one of those packets home and was caught by Qin Yun.

Zhang Yu lived out most of her life but remembering the first time she met Qin Yun felt like it happened yesterday. She never knew what happened to the cigarette packet she sneaked home but she'd never forget their first meeting. Qin Yun never knew why she agreed easily to marry him the same way he never knew why she sneaked the cigarette packet home. She didn't do it out of curiosity, but because of what was written on the cigarette packet. It was like their first meeting, he made her heart tremble... she fell in love with him at first sight.

End of Side Story One.

Related

Side Story Two

Side Story Two – Honeymoon

Living a life without going on a honeymoon once, wasn't complete.

Qin Song confirmed the romantic honeymoon booking. He held his chin and thought he should print it out in colour. He was excited to go home to show Ting Ting their honeymoon booking. She'd use affectionate gestures to show her gratitude, she'd praise him, pet him, spoil him all three hundred and sixty degrees and most of all give him his favourite reward.

As Song Song expected, Han Ting Ting was affectionate toward him for booking their honeymoon trip. After they got married their honeymoon was postponed because her dad was injured, Song Song was busy managing Qin's company and she gave birth to their son Shun Shun. Song Song waited until Shun Shun stopped breastfeeding for them to leave Shun Shun in her mum's care whilst they went on their honeymoon.

'I'll go pack straight away!' Han Ting Ting said excitedly.

'Hey!' Qin Song said. He held Ting Ting's hand to stop her from leaving the sofa. He wasn't Ting Bao's wild husband in name only. 'Honey, you forgot to give me my favourite reward.'

Han Ting Ting kissed Song Song's forehead but he wasn't satisfied. He leaned his hateful face closer to her lips and she kissed his eyelid. He didn't wait for her to tease him again before he held her neck and kissed her lips until they were swollen.

Han Ting Ting wasn't comfortable to be affectionate with Song Song in the living room. Shun Shun was sleeping peacefully in their room and Zhang Yu wasn't home to interrupt them. But she was worried a guest would ring their doorbell.

Qin Song knew what Ting Ting was thinking. He groped under her dress and whispered in her ear. 'Honey, have you forgotten? You were rowdy on the sofa that night. Then there was that afternoon on the yoga mat and behind the front

door...'

Han Ting Ting covered Song Song's mouth. His hands that were under her dress lifted her up by the hips, she wrapped her legs around his waist and they fell back onto the sofa.

A long time later Ting Ting rested her sweaty body that felt like it was steamed in a sauna on Qin Song's satisfied body. He grabbed tissues from the coffee table and used them to gently wipe off fluids on her inner thighs.

Ting Ting ran to the bedroom to pack after she gave Qin Song his favourite reward. Whilst his body felt refreshed he called Qin's company and Liang's company to notify them of his honeymoon leave.

Ten minutes later, Qin Song hung up the phone and dialled Chen Yu Bai's number. 'You're the culprit aren't you? You threatened the Yuan household and let me take the fall!'

'When did I threaten the Yuan household?' Chen Yu Bai denied.

'When I lied to Yuan Yi Yi about giving some of my Liang's company shares to her,' Qin Song said.

Qin Song sighed. He realised he was in the wrong. Chen Yu Bai messed with the Yuan household because of him and it was right that they find him for revenge.

'Ha!' Chen Yu Bai said in a served-you-right tone.

'Third brother...' Qin Song sulked. 'Can't you see the Yuan household and Chen Yi Feng are bullying your loveable sixth brother? Aren't you going to do something to show them how awesome my third brother is? Like teach them a memorable lesson.'

'I-can't-see!' Chen Yu Bai denied.

'Hey! Chen Yu Bai! If you deal with them for me, whatever interest I make from it I'll transfer it to your account, what do you think?' Qin Song begged.

Chen Yu Bai was silent for a while to tease Qin Song. 'I don't have free time.'

'What are you busy with that you don't have free time?' Qin Song asked.

'Who me?' Chen Yu Bai asked and laughed. 'I'm busy conceiving a son with my

wife.'

A cold sweat dripped down Qin Song's forehead. He should have known that bastard Chen Yu Bai if offended Chen Yu Bai would take revenge at the best opportunity. Qin Song tiptoed upstairs and peeked into the bedroom. Mrs Qin junior was happily packing their suitcases. She gave him his favourite reward with bonuses, which made him dreaded about telling her why their honeymoon was postponed again.

Qin Song sighed, he was going to be banished to the sofa for a month. He moved his distressed body into the bedroom.

Chen Yu Bai hung up the phone and rubbed his neck. 'Come in.'

Unlike Mrs Qin junior's dejected reaction after Mr Qin junior informed that their honeymoon was postponed again, Mrs Chen junior was giddy. 'I packed everything. When are we leaving?'

'Um, we need to wait for Qin Song's assistant to deliver us the plane tickets and itinerary,' Chen Yu Bai said. He lifted An Xiao Li onto his lap and wrapped his arms around her waist. 'If you don't like the destinations Qin Song picked out then we can go somewhere else. I can take leave for a month.'

An Xiao Li sighed. 'Ting Bao's wild husband is pitiful.'

Chen Yu Bai rested his chin on An Xiao Li and secretly grinned that little Qin Song was going to be in the dog house the whole time he was holidaying with An Xiao Li.

An Xiao Li took off her husband's silver tie. She thought about Qin Shun Shun's one month milestone. Poor Qin Song was framed by Rong Yan and blurted out 'men who don't even have one son' as a result offended her husband. In that moment she knew Ting Bao's wild husband was doomed. But she didn't know her little Bai would take revenge in such a cruel way, not only did little Bai ruined Qin Song and Ting Ting's honeymoon trip but stole their honeymoon trip from them too.

An Xiao Li was worried that her husband wanted a son but she gave him two daughters.

‘Little Bai...’ An Xiao Li called softly. She looked up at her husband but couldn’t ask him.

Chen Yu Bai pinched his wife’s nose. ‘Don’t have nonsense thoughts. If you really feel sorry for Qin Song then don’t make him more pitiful.’

Chen Yu Bai stole Qin Song’s honeymoon as a tiny warning not to offend him but if it caused his dummy wife to misunderstand then he’d show Qin Song what a real punishment looked like.

An Xiao Li understood what her husband meant and stuck out her tongue. She jumped off his lap. ‘I’ll go check on Chen An An if she finished packing. She wanted to put her doll she sleeps with in her suitcase.’

Chen Yu Bai laughed at his darling oldest daughter’s sleeping habit. He pulled his wife back onto his lap and kissed her. ‘Don’t go, let our daughters pack on their own.’

An Xiao Li wasn’t allowed to escape for a long time. After she and Chen Yu Bai adjusted their clothes they sat back up on the chair. She leaned back on his chest. ‘Chen Yu Bai... you really... don’t mind not having a son?’

Before Qin Song put his foot in his mouth, An Xiao Li thought about it too. Chen Yu Bai was a healthy man and after she gave him two daughters he didn’t want to have a third child, didn’t he regret it?

‘I don’t want a son,’ Chen Yu Bai said. He picked out a dress from the cupboard and passed it to his wife. ‘I don’t want a third child, it doesn’t matter if it’s a boy or girl.’

‘Why?’ An Xiao Li asked.

‘I’m worried the third child would grow up and resent me,’ Chen Yu Bai said.

‘Why?’ An Xiao Li asked.

‘Because...’ Chen Yu Bai turned around to face his wife and spoke in a serious tone. ‘I don’t think any kid will like to be called Chen Li Li.’

An Xiao Li looked down to hide her embarrassment. She named both her daughters, her oldest daughter was Chen An An and her youngest daughter was Chen Xiao Xiao. She picked those names because she didn’t want to get a

headache coming up with original names.

‘What if you name our third child?’ An Xiao Li suggested.

‘You’re the one that gave birth to our children, of course it’s only right that you get to name our children,’ Chen Yu Bai explained and changed his clothes at the same time.

‘What if our third child is named Chen Xiao Li?’ An Xiao Li asked.

Chen Yu Bai glanced at his wife. ‘Do you think I want twenty years from now for a stranger to hug my third daughter and call her Xiao Li?’

An Xiao Li heard the sweetness behind her husband’s roundabout way of saying that he loved her and their daughters and didn’t want a third child even if it was a son. There were love hearts in her eyes, if he took her out to the black market and sold her in that moment she wouldn’t have noticed.

Qin Song’s assistant arrived and delivered the plane tickets and itinerary to Chen Yu Bai.

A tropical beach was indeed a romantic destination, clear ocean blue water, cool breezes and soft beach sand. An Xiao Li held Chen An An with one hand and held Chen Xiao Xiao with her other hand. They strolled along the sandy beach. Chen Yu Bai was behind them holding their suitcases. The sight of his family enjoying a relaxing holiday warmed even his cold glasses.

Chen Yu Bai thought it was the best feeling in the world to be able to protect his wife and their two little daughters that childish kiddo wouldn’t understand because Qin Song wasn’t blessed with daughters.

It was that ignorant kiddo’s own fault for being banished to the living room for a month. Chen Yu Bai happily adjusted his warm glasses.

End of Side Story Two.

Fated Marriage Complete.

The End.

Related